No mortal who has seen thee smile for joy
Could ever cause thy heart a moment's pain,
For fear those perfect curves he might destroy,
And never see this lovely smile again.

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THE SHRINE OF VENUS.

From the Painting by Sir L. Alma Tadema.

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FROM THE STALLS

Photo Campbell Gray.

MABEL LOVE.

The Beautiful Dancer.

A sweet, gentle-voiced girl with blue eyes.

Miss Mabel Love's private life is a happy, if placid, one. "I really don't think I have any hobbies at all," she says. "Sometimes at the seaside I amuse myself by trying to swim, and then, a short time ago, I went in for learning a little French.

"I think there is plenty to do in life without hobbies. My chief pleasure is going out shopping with my mother.

"I wonder whether all we read about other girls and their hobbies is true? I know when I was in America I was credited with reading books that I had never heard of, and of playing games that I had never seen."

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Paris Johnston & Hoffmann.

QUEENIE LEIGHTON.

Principal Boy at Drury Lane.

The stage is a world of surprises, even for favourites like Miss Queenie Leighton, the most charming of pantomime "principal boys."

She was in the middle of singing Leslie Stuart's "Dandy Fifth"—by no means a comic song—when yells of laughter rose from all parts of the house. Naturally, poor Miss Leighton wondered where she was to blame.

But the laughter was provoked by no lapse on the part of the singer. It was all on account of a piece of impromptu buffoonery perpetrated by a comedian at the stage corner, who saw an opportunity of raising a laugh by pretending to toast a huge property cat before a stage fire.

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Photo *Fenlebam & Barfield.*

HARRY RANDALL.

Who Appears in the Drury Lane Pantomime.

Harry Randall has a big voice now, but once it was beautiful and bell-like.

What it has lost in quality it has gained in power. His singing-master said, "When that boy's voice broke, it broke into a storm."

Harry Randall commenced his public career by singing songs at temperance meetings in Sunday-schools. He could make his living apart from the stage.

Originally he was a seal engraver, and at twenty-one had built up his own business. One evening, about this time, he convulsed a few friends by his rendering of a comic song, and at once decided to "give up the seals of office" and try the halls.

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Photo Langfier, 23A, Old Bond Street.

GEORGE ALEXANDER.

As Oscar Stephensson in "The Prodigal Son."

"I heard the following amusing conversation," says Mr. George Alexander, "some years ago at a hairdresser's shop in one of the big cities in the North, where I was playing at the time:

"The wielder of the scissors, who knew me by sight, gave me a sly wink and inquired of his subject if he had seen George Alexander in his latest play at the local theatre.

"'Seen whom?' answered the man, who had previously professed to know the history of the stage from the days of Macready to date. 'George Alexander! No; who's he? Never heard of him!'"

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Photo Bevington,

ALICE CRAWFORD

In "A Privy Council," in Which She Appeared at Sandringham.

Miss Alice Crawford is a magnificent specimen of Australian girlhood, who can walk her twenty miles a day with ease.

Mr. J. C. Williams, known as the "Australian George Edwardes," first brought her out. On her first tour she appeared in seven different parts on seven consecutive nights.

Her fine presence and deep, resonant voice are in keeping with her successes as a tragedy queen, but in "A Privy Council" she has displayed a rich gift of humour.

"The other day," she says, "a gentleman in South Africa, who had seen my portrait in an illustrated paper, wrote asking me to marry him if I liked his photo, which he was sending me!"

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MADAME BATAVIA.

The Cleverest Bear in the World.

Madame Batavia, of the Italian Circus, is, without doubt, the most wonderful bear in the world.

To ask a bear to wear a lady's clothes and behave in a ladylike way is surely demanding a great deal, and yet Madame responds admirably to all the numerous calls made on her intelligence.

She masquerades so successfully as a woman that her trainer has frequently been accused of presenting before the public a girl in a bear's skin.

Madame Batavia has danced at the Covent Garden Ball, and driven about London in a carriage.

She frequently receives presents of clothes, ornaments, etc., from her many admirers.

Photo Lenton & Co

Photo Johnston & Hoffmann.

MAUDE LESLIE

As Betsy in "Oliver Twist."

Miss Maude Leslie is a tall, graceful girl with a very musical voice.

"I really am," she says, "more attractive to look at than I appear in my present part, and the only thing I dislike about character acting is that one has to make up so hideously at times."

Miss Leslie has been on the stage three years.

She once undertook Miss Rosina Filippi's part at the Adelphi at a minute's notice.

She has understudied three big parts at once, "And," she added, "what I should have done had all three principals fallen ill simultaneously, I really don't know."

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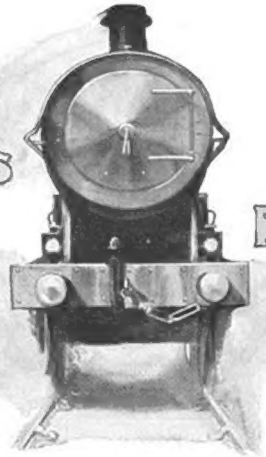
STORIES OF THE RAILWAY.



ILLUSTRATED BY P. B. HICKLING.

BY VICTOR L. WHITECHURCH.

Thorpe Hazell, the Hero of this Series, is an Eccentric Individual whose Hobbies are Vegetarianism, Physical Exercise, and the Solving of Railway Mysteries. His Successful Unravelling of another Knotty Problem Forms the Subject of this Story.

VII.—HOW THE BISHOP KEPT HIS APPOINTMENT.

"BUT," said the Bishop of Frattenbury, "while—er—agreeing with you on the question of consuming alcohol, I cannot follow what you say with regard to animal food. Many animals were—er—in point of fact designed by a beneficent Creator for the sustenance of human life."

"You've no small opinion of yourself, my lord," rejoined Thorpe Hazell, "if you really believe that the pig was created in order that *you* might have ham for breakfast."

The Bishop of Frattenbury reddened. He was not accustomed to be spoken to like this by a mere layman, and he would have resented it even in a church dignitary.

"I scarcely commend your flippant way of putting things, sir," he rejoined severely, "even for the sake of argument. I was alluding to the general scheme of creation, and the—er—fitness of things."

"But it amounts to this: You are in favour of killing pigs, and I am not," went on Hazell calmly, drawing a cigarette from his case; "and the question is: Are *you* a better Christian for killing your pigs, or am I, who have a certain amount of respect for the life of a hog, which you haven't?"

The Bishop frowned angrily.

"What you say is quite beside the mark," he answered; "I am not in the habit of taking the life of *any* animal."

"No; but you encourage butchery in others, which is degrading. But to go back to the subject we were discussing. Have you ever had any practical experience in the analysis of foodstuffs?"

"Of course not," said the Bishop; "I'm not a chemist."

"More's the pity, because, being a Bishop, it might be good for you to know something of the laws of health—capital subject for a charge to your clergy! Now, there are four excellent foods, each of them excelling the nutritive powers of animal flesh—oatmeal, macaroni, lentils, and Dutch cheese."

And he ticked them off one by one on his fingers.

"Really, sir!" exclaimed the Bishop, who was now in a very bad temper indeed, "I

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must ask you to excuse me from taking a further part in this conversation."

And, opening the book he had been reading, with a vicious gesture, he composed himself in the corner of the first-class compartment in which both were traveling. Thorpe Hazell smoked his cigarette quite calmly, a smile on his lips. He had not intended to say anything rude, but the Bishop's dogmatic manner had rather put his back up.

Presently he removed his coat, stood upright in the carriage, and commenced throwing his arms to and fro violently.

The Bishop of Frattenbury laid down his book and gazed at him in astonishment.

"A digestive exercise, my lord," explained Hazell, pausing for a moment. "It is now a quarter to seven, and I hope to dine at eight. You draw in a very deep breath—so!—then you move the arms ten times—so!—then you exhale the breath—slowly. It is also a safeguard against unnecessary flesh development. You should have practised it years ago!" And he lit a fresh cigarette.

There was a crash and a rattle and a heavy bumping. The Bishop was suddenly shot forward into Hazell's arms. The lamp went out, and total darkness followed. Then the carriage reeled like a drunken man, the panes of glass splintered, there was a dull shock, and Hazell, who had managed to get his hand outside the door and open it, fell out of the compartment on to the soft turf beside the line. He heard the Bishop follow him. A moment or two afterwards there was a heavy splash, and then a muffled cry somewhere below.

Thorpe Hazell blew the fragments of his cigarette out of his mouth, sat up, rubbed an injured elbow, and looked around him. There was an awful hissing of escaping steam from the engine. The driver was on the ground, a lamp in hand; another lamp was dancing about as the guard appeared on the scene.

"What's up?" cried Hazell, as he went towards the engine.

"She's off the line, sir," replied the man.

"Anyone hurt?" yelled the guard.

"I think not," replied the driver, "we weren't running fast. Jim!"

"Hullo!"

"All right?"

"Aye, mate, I jumped the other side," exclaimed the fireman.

"How about the passengers?" asked Hazell of the guard.

"There were only four in the train, sir," replied the guard—"two thirds—ah, here they are—yourself, and the Bishop."

"Ah, the Bishop, of course," said Hazell. "I think he got out just after me," he added, with a slight chuckle. "I hope he's not hurt."

At that moment a faint cry for help came from the foot of the embankment. Hazell and the guard hurried down, and there, by the light of the lamp, they beheld a sorry sight. At the bottom of the bank was a ditch, bordered by a barbed wire fence. The unfortunate prelate had fallen into the very muddiest part of the ditch, and in trying to emerge therefrom had caught his clothes on the barbed wire. He was a mass of mud from head to foot, his apron hung in ribbons, one of his coat tails was torn clean off, and one of his sleeves ripped up from elbow to wrist. Blood was trickling down his face from a slight cut on the cheek.

"Are you hurt, my lord?" asked Hazell.

"No," replied the Bishop grimly, "I don't think so—except a few bruises. But I'm exceedingly uncomfortable."

There was a look on the Bishop's muddy and bloodstained face as the lantern flashed upon him that suddenly appealed to Hazell.

He gave him his arm and helped him up the embankment. Then they found out what had happened to the little branch train in which they had been traveling. The crank axle of the tiny tank engine had broken, the leading wheels had left the rails, and one of the three carriages composing the train had jumped the metals with the shock. No one was hurt, and the Bishop's plight was really the worst of the lot.

The line upon which the catastrophe had taken place was the little branch one from Heston to Cathfield, a distance of some seven miles, and a single track. Only four or five trains are timed to run per day upon this little bit of line, and even then it scarcely pays the company to run them, so small is the traffic. This train, from Heston to Cathfield, was the last one of the day. It was a winter's evening, exceedingly dark, and a hurried consultation took place between guard and passengers as to what was the best thing to be done.

"We're about three miles from Heston," said the former, "and it's impossible, as you see, to go on. The nearest breakdown train is at Blayford, and it's not likely that it will be dispatched till the morning. There's not a house anywhere near here, and the best thing we can do is to walk back along the line to Heston Junction. There's a very fair

inn there where you gentlemen can get beds for the night."

Then the Bishop of Frattenbury—dirty, grimy, blood-bespattered—stood forth in his torn, fluttering garments, and spoke.

"I *won't* go back to Heston," he exclaimed. "I am due to speak at an important meeting at Redminster to-night, and I insist upon your making some arrangements for getting me there. I *must* be there!"

Hazell looked at him with admiration. The true British spirit had come out in his lordship—the spirit of pig-headedness that refuses to be daunted by obstacles because it has a grievance against someone.

"I'm very sorry," said the guard, "but I don't see how you're to get to Redminster to-night."

"I tell you I *must* be there," said the Bishop, the marks of episcopacy manifesting themselves despite the mud. "You ought to have guarded against this breakdown, but, since it has occurred, it is your plain duty to devise some plan by which passengers shall reach their destination. I am the principal speaker at this meeting to-night, and in my whole career I have never failed to keep an engagement. I intended catching the 7.30 from Cathfield to Redminster, arriving at the latter place at 7.50, in time for me to reach the hall at 8. It is your duty to assist me to do this."

It was splendid to hear him speak. Even the driver, who was standing by, felt that somehow he had committed a perfectly heinous offence, and, although he was a Baptist by choice, it began to dawn upon him that a Bishop's anathemas might perchance affect Nonconformists in certain cases.

"If it weren't for the broken axle," he said apologetically, "we might get her on the rails with the screw-jack and try running her on."

"Do so," commanded the Bishop, "and, if necessary, proceed without the axle."

"It is absolutely impossible to go on," broke in Thorpe Hazell, "but, if you are determined to speak at this meeting, I might perhaps make a suggestion."

"The officials ought to get me out of the difficulty," replied the Bishop loftily, "but what do you propose?"

"It is now close on seven," said Hazell, "and the distance to Cathfield is nearly four miles along the line. It is out of the question trying to catch the 7.30, but there is a later train which would get you into Redminster by 8.45, and if we started walking at once we might catch it. Perhaps you would allow me to accompany you, as I wish to go on to Redminster myself."

The Bishop thought for a moment.

"Ahem! I suppose it is the only course to take, and I am much obliged to you. But I shall write to the general manager," he went on, turning to the guard.

"Yes, my lord," said that individual meekly.

"We ought to lose no time," said Hazell, "but—er—if we catch that train—your lordship—well, is hardly in a suitable costume to speak at a meeting."

"Dear me!" exclaimed the Bishop, "I never thought of that. How exceedingly unfortunate. I have no change in my bag, either—only my—er—night—attire. But I could possibly borrow a coat from one of the clergy."

"Meanwhile," said Hazell, "if you will allow me, I have a spare jacket I could lend you—just for the walk—that is, if you can get into it."

"You're welcome to my coat," broke in the guard, with the idea of a peace-offering in his mind. "I've another in my van—and I'm about your size."

Finally, the Bishop of Frattenbury took off his coat and tattered apron, and accepted the guard's offer. But he stuck to his own hat, which he had left in the carriage. Then Thorpe Hazell borrowed a lantern from the guard and set off along the track with the Bishop, whilst the others prepared to walk back to Heston.

"I'm afraid you will find it rather a stiff walk," said Hazell. "Might I offer you some refreshments? I seldom travel without them."

"Thank you," replied the Bishop, "but I am a teetotaler."

"The refreshments to which I allude are chocolate and milk," rejoined Hazell.

The Bishop accepted a bit of chocolate, and they stumbled along the centre of the single track in silence for a while. It was rough work, but the Bishop well understood that the catching of the later train at Cathfield meant a quick progress, and that even then it was a mere chance. Yet the prelate was a man of grit, despite his pompous demeanour, and he was determined that the Redminster meeting should not lose his speech on the Education Question if he could help it.

They had gone about a quarter of a mile along the track, Hazell leading the way, and considerately directing the light of the lantern on to the ground so that his companion might

There, by the light of the lamp, they beheld a sorry sight.

best see where to tread, when the former suddenly uttered an exclamation of surprise.

The flash of his lantern had fallen upon an object lying beside the line. He stopped short.

"What is it?" asked the Bishop.

"If you could spare me a light, we might make out presently," said Hazell.

"How?"

"Here's a trolley. If we can get it on the line, we could ride on it."

"But you have no motive power?" [illegible]

"Be [illegible] to be the power," broke in Hazell, [illegible] not only as a [illegible] us, but, if I am not very much mistaken, most of the line from here to Cathfield is on a down gradient. Kindly give me a hand!"

The Bishop, in some surprise, did as he was asked.

Under Hazell's directions his lordship assisted him to put the two pairs of wheels on the rails and the heavy frame on to them. There was a shunter's "coupling staff" among the tackle, and Hazell placed this, together with the lamp, on the trolley.

"Evidently the platelayers have bagged it to push with," he said. "Well, we may find it handy? Now, then, can you kneel on one knee on that side? That's right. I'll take this. Press your other foot on the ground and give a shove—so! Off we go. Can you manage it?"

"It's work to which I'm scarcely accustomed," said the panting prelate grimly, "but I'll do my best."

"Good!" replied Hazell, in admiration. "We're picking up speed fast now. Steady—long strokes, please!"

The trolley began to run along rapidly. Presently the light of the lamp fell with a passing flash on a short post beside the line, with two arms, one level, and the other at a downward angle.

"A falling gradient!" cried Hazell. "Climb right on. That's it!"

He gave the Bishop a hand while the latter struggled on to the trolley, falling flat as he did so. He clutched his hat with one hand and the edge of the trolley with the other. Hazell knelt, holding the Bishop's coat just at the small of the back to steady him. The trolley felt the momentum every instant, and was soon running on the down grade quite furiously.

"I—hope—there's—no—danger!" jerked the Bishop as he bumped. "If—we—met a—train—I——"

"All right!" broke in Hazell cheerfully. "It's a single line, and our driver had the staff. No other train can run."

The exact meaning was dim to his companion, who gathered, nevertheless, that his fears in this direction were groundless.

"But—suppose the—line's—not—clear——or the—things they—call—points—are not—set—right!"

Hazell laughed.

"Don't worry. There are no points between Heston Junction and Cathfield—not even a station. It's quite safe."

"But—how—can we—stop?" went on the Bishop, as the trolley bounded forward.

"This gradient won't last long, and we can always stop by putting our feet on the rails and pressing—a human brake!"

"I—hope it—won't—end in—a—human breakage!" exclaimed the Bishop, with a grim and noble attempt at humour which went straight to Hazell's heart.

"Good old chap!" he muttered. Presently the speed began to slacken, and the Bishop slowly rose to his knees from his recumbent position. Simultaneously both men broke out into a hearty laugh.

"Enjoying the ride?" asked Hazell.

"I was thinking that some of the younger clergy might enjoy seeing me taking it," remarked the Bishop.

"A coincidence—so was I!"

"Shall we catch that other train?"

Hazell managed to look at his watch.

"Easily! We must push again a bit. I'll use the staff."

He stood upright to do so. The Bishop kicked out manfully once more. As Hazell had said, the wind was behind them, helping them tremendously. They struck another gradient—a long one this time. Hazell looked again at his watch.

"It's rather different from walking," he said. "We shall be in loads of time for the 8.45. That will get us to Redminster a little after nine."

"No chance of catching the 7.30, I suppose?" asked the Bishop.

"No. It's not very far off that time now—and we've the best part of two miles to go. Besides which, the last half mile or more is a steep up gradient, and we shall have to walk it."

They set to pushing again. The line was almost level now. Presently the Bishop exclaimed:

"What's that light?"

Far away, on their right, a sudden flash of radiance had sprung up in the darkness of the black wintry night.

"Opening the coal-box to fire a locomotive," replied Hazell. "And what's more, I'm pretty sure it's the train you wanted to catch running along towards Cathfield. Hullo!" as he caught sight of another gradient post, "there's a steep drop here—one in fifty, if I recollect rightly. Jump on and hold tight! There'll be a curve presently."

The trolley had already begun to gather speed. Even Hazell, who was on the right of the Bishop, had to hold on. Once more the light of the main-line train flashed upwards, like a searchlight, and this time Hazell gave vent to an excited "Hullo!"

In order to explain the thought that had suddenly struck him, it will be necessary to give a brief description of the railway at this particular spot. As has been said, the little single line from Heston Junction to Cathfield was about seven miles in length. From about two miles beyond the scene of the breakdown it bore round gradually to the left, until at length it met the main line at a point a little over a mile from Cathfield.

But this point was not a junction. That is to say, the single line, instead of crossing on to the main by facing points controlled by a signal-box in the angle, ran parallel on the left of the main track all the way to Cathfield, where it had its own little "bay" terminus.

This arrangement, involving a little more capital expenditure at first, had its advantages in that the necessity for a "junction-box" and the maintenance of its signalman was obviated, thus making it cheaper in the long run. Similar instances may occur to the reader, as, for example, the running of the Midhurst single line from Fishbourne to

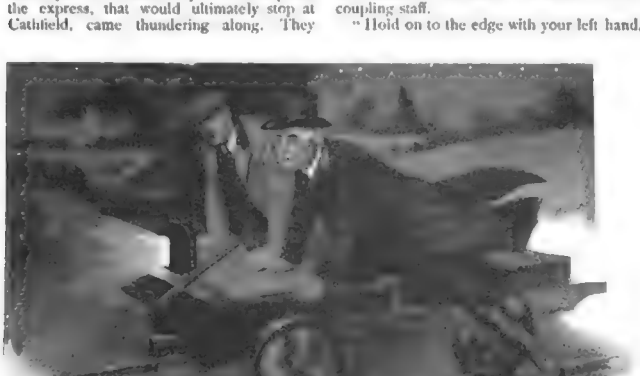
Chichester alongside the up main South Coast track; or the bit of the Abingdon branch that runs parallel with the main down Great Western for some little distance into Radley. The arrangement, also, has another advantage in leaving both main and branch lines absolutely clear at all times.

Now the trolley, rushing downwards at fairly high speed, was just approaching the point from which it would continue running close along the main up track. And on this main up track, further away from the point, the express, that would ultimately stop at Cathfield, came thundering along. They

They came swinging round the curve with a clatter, and then the light of the lamp glanced on the shining up rail parallel with them and some five feet from the right edge of the trolley.

Hazell looked back. The head-lights of the express were out of sight now, there being a bit of a curve on the main line. Kneeling upright, as well as the shaking trolley would let him, Hazell took up the guard's lamp and turned the red shade on. Then he hooked its handle to the hook on the end of the coupling staff.

"Hold on to the edge with your left hand,



"A falling gradient!" cried Hazell.

were, naturally, in front of her, and Hazell knew by her head-lights, which just appeared in view—a green light above a white—that she was the train in question.

"Hullo!" he shouted, as a sudden idea took possession of him.

"What's—the—matter?" cried the Bishop, who was on the jerk again.

Hazell's reply was unintelligible to his lordship.

"The tail-lights of the branch train are a red *and* a white, but the main-line trains carry a red light only!"

"What—on—earth——"

"Hold *on!*"

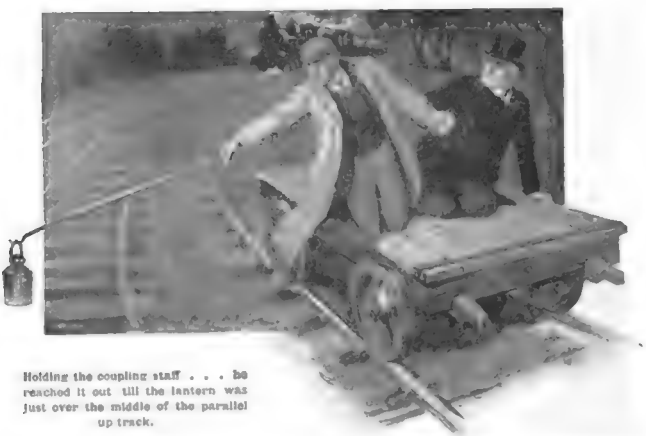
my lord! Right! Now take my left hand with your other. Don't let go, for goodness' sake. Good! Here she comes. Just in time!"

Holding the coupling staff with his right hand, he reached it out, till the lantern was just over the middle of the parallel up track, the red light pointing back towards the approaching train.

"What—are—you—doing?"

"Trying to get you in time for your meeting!" replied Hazell. "Hold on. We're nearly on the level now."

As the driver of the express came round the slight curve, he saw the red tail-light,



Holding the coupling staff . . . he reached it out till the lantern was just over the middle of the parallel up track.

apparently of an up main line train, for it was on his track, moving on in front of him. Instantly he shut off steam and whistled furiously.

And then, as Hazell glanced back, he saw the sparks flying under the train, and he knew that the Westinghouse brake was doing its work.

"I can manage by myself now," he cried, for the trolley was slackening speed. "Stop her, my lord!"

Very gingerly the Bishop applied the brake—to wit, his episcopal boot—and slowly they came to a standstill. So did the train—not fifty yards behind.

The front guard jumped from his van and came running forward, expecting to see a train—or, at least, a detached truck in the way. When he caught sight of the trolley and the two men on the other rail, his indignation expressed itself in pretty strong language as he inquired what they meant by it. Hazell briefly explained the breakdown and how they had journeyed on.

"But, why the —— did you stop my train, even if your story's true?"

"Because," said Hazell imperturbably, "my friend the Bishop here did not wish to lose his connection."

"Bishop be——" began the guard, as he turned his lantern on the prelate.

"Hush!" checked Hazell, "his lordship is unaccustomed to such language."

"A pretty Bishop!" sneered the guard, as he looked at the extraordinary figure. "But you'll have to pay for this!"

"Oh, no," replied Hazell sweetly. "We've both got first-class tickets. But we're wasting precious time. Clear this trolley off—we're coming with you."

"And I will see that you are properly recompensed," said the Bishop loftily, recovering something of his episcopal dignity.

They went on in the guard's van. At Cathfield Hazell explained matters to the stationmaster, who was getting anxious about the non-arrival of the branch train.

"You'll have to settle with the authorities for stopping the train," he said, as Hazell gave him his card.

"Oh, I think that will be easy enough—I've done one or two little amateur jobs for the G.M.," replied the railway expert; "he knows me very well."

The run on to Redminster was in a first-class carriage.

"Let me thank you exceedingly for all your trouble," said the Bishop, who was still attired in the guard's coat. "How can I repay you for it?"

"Easily," replied Hazell. "May I refer

to our former conversation—just after we left Heston?"

"Certainly."

"You appeared to be sceptical as to the food values of oatmeal, macaroni, Dutch cheese, and lentils. It would be such a pleasure to me, my lord, if you would lose that scepticism, after personal experience."

"I don't quite understand."

"If, in return for any small service I have rendered, you would try these foods exclusively, with the exception of milk as a beverage, for, say, a fortnight, I'm sure you would be convinced."

His lordship pressed his lips and frowned, but the frown soon developed into a grim smile.

"Very well," he said, "I *will*."

"And you will let me know?"

"I will let you know."

"Thank you, my lord. Ah, here we are at Redminster. But you cannot speak in that costume?"

"I shall drive straight to the Deanery first, and borrow some clothes from the Dean. I am staying the night there."

At a quarter-past eight the Bishop of Frattenbury, rigidly clad—a little *too* rigidly, perhaps, for the Dean was the sparer man of the two—was addressing a crowded meeting at the Redminster Town Hall as only his lordship, who was famed for platform eloquence, could.

* * * * *

And here followed the postscript, after the lapse of a couple of weeks.

The Palace,
Frattenbury.

My Dear Sir,

I have faithfully kept my promise to you, and strictly adhered to the abominable diet you prescribed for a fortnight—which ends to-night. I am much looking forward to resuming my ham for breakfast to-morrow, and rejoice that Providence provided the necessary animal for its production. I am still more than grateful to you for your kind and shrewd services on the eventful evening when I first made your acquaintance, and should you ever be in Frattenbury, hope that you will remember that the Apostle has enjoined bishops to be "given to hospitality." You shall, on that occasion, have your four abominable (the word suits admirably) foods *ad lib.*, but you will find me carnivorous.

Believe me,
Yours very truly,
G. Frattenbury.

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The Royal Magazine.

Monsieur M. V. Goron.
(*Late Chief of the Paris Detective Police.*)

THE SOLUTION.

The ingenious way in which M. Goron deals with the blackmailer, and thus saves the lady's good name, will be found in the January Novel Magazine, in the form of a story, which is the first of a series of True Detective Stories, extracted from the diary of this famous investigator of crimes. Each story is complete in itself, and proves in a most marked manner that it is possible for truth to be stranger than fiction.

Native colporteurs at Alexandria.

THE STORY OF THE BIBLE SOCIETY

What it has Accomplished, and the Work it is Doing.

By Chris. Healy.

In Queen Victoria Street, London, a few yards away from the world's busiest street, is a stately building around which gather the countless romances which arise from the most splendid romance of all — the Romance of the Bible.

When it is stated that from this building, the headquarters of the British and Foreign Bible Society, over 192,500,000 copies of the Scriptures have been distributed during the last 101 years, the tremendous significance of these gigantic figures fails to reach the understanding. It is easier grasped when it is said that the Society distributes a Bible every five seconds of the twenty-four hours; and that if one day's output of Bibles were piled on end they would make a column 25coft. in height, reckoning but 1¾in. to each copy. One might pile the three highest buildings or monuments in the world on top of each other, and yet not reach the height attained by the vast pile of 20,000 copies issued each working day.

The wonder grows when we learn that the world's greatest book is issued in 390 different forms of human speech, fifty of which are also available for the blind; and that enthusiastic translators are continually reducing to written form languages which, hitherto, had not even an alphabet. The story of the difficulties which beset the staff of translators employed by the Society can only be fully realised by those who have tried to convey ideas and idioms from one language into another. In Norfolk Island a translator was working with a native, and had some difficulty in translating the account of John the Baptist, especially of his diet of locusts and honey, and he said to the native: "What is the word for honey?"

"Honey! Never heard of it. There is no honey in this island. What is it?"

The translator explained that it was a sort of juice that comes from a large insect. The native's face brightened as he gave the equivalent word, which was eventually printed. The translator's disgust can be imagined later on when he found that he had rendered the passage that the Baptist's food "consisted of locusts and oil of blue-bottles."

In the Fijis, where snow is unknown, the passage about washing whiter than snow becomes "whiter than white rain." In British Columbia, a missionary wanted his catechist to translate "a crown of glory that fadeth not away." This was done to the satisfaction of all concerned, but in process of time the missionary found to his horror that it had been rendered: "A hat that

Bible-selling among the snows of Cerro de Pasco, in the Andes. This city is the highest in the world.

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One of the largest one-volume Bibles, with the smallest Bible and the smallest New Testament in the world.

never wears out." A native Cree Indian, who aided in a translation for his tribe, translated Gentiles into Blackfeet, a hated rival tribe.

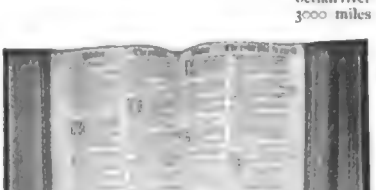
Even when, after much labour, the translation has been made, it suffers many vicissitudes before it is finally put into circulation. A missionary spent twenty years translating the Scriptures into Matabele. The first 500 copies were captured by rebel Matabeles and used for head-gear.

When a revised version of the Gospels in Nupe (for West Africa) was being sent to the Bible House, the MS. went to the bottom of the river Niger on its way home, but was fished up again. Still greater disaster befell the MS. of St. Matthew in Sokuna (for the south-eastern district of Victoria Nyanza). While on its way to England it was seized and destroyed by the Ba-Kavirondo. But the stories of the work and difficulties which have accompanied the translation of the Bible into nearly 400 languages and dialects pale before the fascinating record of its distribution.

The Bible has been spread in many lands mainly through the devotion of the colporteur, a lesser servant of the Gospel whose life is a combination of all that is daring, picturesque, and noble in the life of the gipsy, the explorer, the missionary, and, very often, of the martyr. He is a strange, pathetic figure who is well typified in the splendid statue of the sower scattering seed, which we owe to the chisel of Mr. Hamo Thornycroft.

When the Diamond Jubilee procession filed through the streets of London the spectators witnessed a picturesque array of the varied types of tributary races who gather under the banner of the Empire. If the servants of the Society could be set in the order of procession, one would see an even nobler spectacle—a veritable pageant of the human race. The colporteur is a man of every colour and every clime, whose method of travel is as varied as the nationality to which he belongs. In Malaysia he rides from village to village in a bullock-waggon, or in a native boat; on the mountainous heights of the Andes, three miles above the sea level, amid the perpetual snow, he employs the sure-footed mule; in Russia the bells of his sleigh scare the wolves as he dashes across the steppes; in Lombardy he rides a bicycle; and in the Sahara and Mongolian deserts he passes from place to place on a camel. One colporteur made an eleven weeks' trip down the Lena, a Siberian river 3000 miles

An agent of the Society in Malaysia.



The first English Bible printed on English soil. It bears the inscription, "J. Nycolson, Southwarke, 1537."

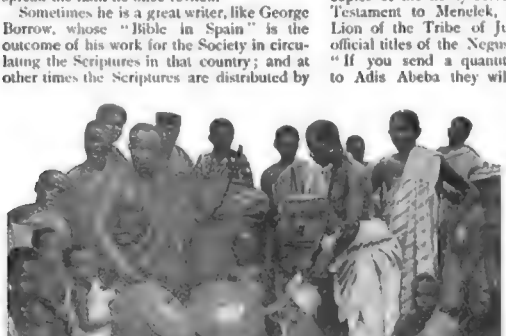
long, selling Gospels, in their own tongue, to the Yakuts in the villages along the banks. Part of the way he traveled on an open raft, watching carefully over the ten hundredweight of Bibles which he had to sell to the appreciative villagers.

The Bible Society's agent starting from Kalgan on a colportage tour among the Mongols.

The colporteur includes all sorts and conditions of men in his varied ranks. Sometimes he is a man of humble birth, who is moved by the sacred message that "this gospel of the Kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations," and cheerfully undertakes the arduous work which may lead to his death. One colporteur was a Boxer leader, who, like Saul, had persecuted Christians, and, struck by their patience and fortitude in suffering and death, was converted and spread the faith he once reviled.

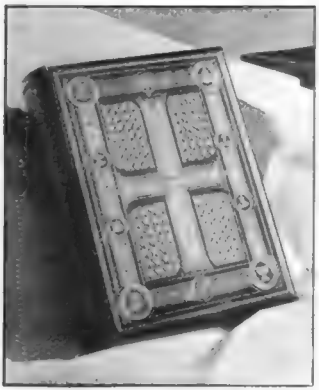
Sometimes he is a great writer, like George Borrow, whose "Bible in Spain" is the outcome of his work for the Society in circulating the Scriptures in that country; and at other times the Scriptures are distributed by a man of the highest rank, like the Emperor of Abyssinia, who gives all the aid in his power to the Society's noble work.

When the Society sent specially bound copies of the newly corrected Ethiopic New Testament to Menelek, "the Conquering Lion of the Tribe of Judah"—one of the official titles of the Negus—wrote in return: "If you send a quantity of these books to Adis Abeba they will be received with pleasure, and I will see that they are distributed, and a good price paid for them."



Natives beating drums, covered with human skin, to collect an audience at Abertifi, West Africa, on the arrival of the Society's agent with Scriptures in the Otshi language.

Sometimes the colporteur has to do some "mountaineering." The Peruvian city of Cerro de Pasco is the loftiest city in the world. To reach it one has to travel by a mountain railway which climbs steep gradients, and runs along the edge of towering cliffs and bottomless precipices. The traveller must pass through miles of desert with



The Bible presented to King Edward VII. on his Coronation.

crescent mounds of white sand which rise before him in a dazzling mirage. Yet at this great height, Mr. A. R. Stark, the Society's agent, sold 200 Gospels, eighty Testaments, and several complete Bibles. During his travels he suffered terribly from sickness, occasioned by the rarefied air of the mountainous altitude.

But even this vivid journey in the clouds has not the weird interest attached to the visit of a colporteur to Abertifi, in West Africa, where the natives gathered an audience for him by beating drums which were covered with human skin; and here it may be stated that the prices paid by the natives of the less civilised portions of the globe for a Bible are both amusing and instructive. In Uganda the natives pay in cowries; the Lubans, another West African tribe, have exchanged the Scriptures for so many yards of calico; in the outlying parts of Morocco the natives often pay in eggs and barley. In Mongolia the colporteur sells the Gospels for a piece of coarse silk; cheese is also an accepted article of barter on the Mongolian plains, while Gospels have also been exchanged for leather thongs or strings for mending harness.

Malaysia is one of the many places where the Gospel has won signal triumphs. In Minahassa, North Celebes, over 180,000 people have been won from barbarous savagery to Christianity. The chief method of travel in this district is by means of a bullock-waggon—a clumsy, heavily-made vehicle drawn by two bullocks at a speed of two miles an hour. As the entire population are agriculturists, and often away from home the whole of the day, the best place for selling the Scriptures is in the village markets. Here the people gather at daybreak, and business goes on until ten in the morning. The colporteur arrives, selects a spot, and then sells every copy of the Scriptures with him. The scene in the market-place is picturesque in the extreme.

At present the Society's agent is practically the only Christian worker itinerating among the four millions of people who reside in Mongolia. Last October he returned from a five months' tour, during which he covered 1800 miles without seeing the face of a white man.

The case which contained the Coronation Bible, together with the Bible itself, opened to show the inscription.

Shortly after his start in May, he saw sufficient evidence of the arid nature of the country to make his attempt to cross the Mongolian desert an impossibility. No rain had fallen for three years, and there was no grass, no green thing amid the vast expanse of arid sand. The camels and horses began to fail for lack of proper forage, and he was obliged to return to Urga, where his beasts were so broken down that they had to have ten days' rest and good feeding before he was able to resume his journey.

The results of his travels were by no means commensurate with the arduous labour and peril he had passed. The city of Urga would not buy one copy, although several were sold in the suburbs, yet at Chôr, where there is a lamasery with 4000 lamas, he sold 2300 copies of the Scriptures, mainly to schoolboys who were being trained as lamas.

The efforts of the missionaries in Mongolia have met with small response. In China proper, however, Christianity is spreading rapidly, and the sale of the Scriptures last year in that empire attained the record figures of over a million copies. The chronological chapters of the Old Testament are always of special interest to the Chinese on account of their own reverence for pedigree. In no place has the colporteur to be more tactful than in China. The great Boxer rising which caused the massacre of so many native Christians, was a stern reminder to teachers of Western canons that the East has its own ideals which it retains jealously, even savagely. Yet the influence of the Bible has nowhere been more marked than in some of the villages in the interior of this vast Empire.

Experience has shown that the Confucian is moved to reverent wonder by the laws of Moses, but the serious Taoist, or Buddhist, is touched by the words of the prophets. Some of the Bibles sold in China have often prepared whole villages for the arrival of a missionary who, to his astonishment and joy, has found that scores of men have been converted to Christianity by the Bible alone.

Some years ago, in Kuan Kai, Manchuria, a small hamlet about sixty miles from Kirin, there were three families who belonged to a Chinese religious society, but who were dissatisfied with Buddhist teaching. These people had never heard of Christianity, but such was their soul-hunger that they decided that one of their number should go out into the world to look for a new God and a new religion, the others undertaking the care of his family during his absence.

After a long tramp the man came to Kirin, where he heard a missionary preach the Gospel. He returned to his village with a Bible, and taught his own people the new doctrine. About once in three months he would walk sixty miles into Kirin for further instruction, and eventually he invited the Rev. A. R. Crawford, of the Irish Presbyterian Mission at Kirin, to visit the village in order to baptise the students of the Bible. To his surprise, the missionary found a large gathering of Christians waiting for him.

A Russian colporteur at Bogodal Station, Siberia.

The same phenomenon has occurred in India. Some years ago, in the Bhagalpur district of Bengal, a fakir, who had made a great name as a teacher of a new religion, increased the number of his followers until his disciples were more numerous than those following most of the creeds taught in the district. Attracted by his reputation, a missionary sought out the man and induced him to explain his teaching. When he had done so, the missionary exclaimed:

"Why, you are teaching pure Christianity!"

It then appeared that the fakir's teaching was based on a sacred book in his possession, and, after further pressing, he produced from its hiding-place a tattered copy of one of the Gospels in Hindi, which had, somehow or

other, come into his hands. Many of the fakir's followers, after some further instruction, were baptised into the Christian Church.

Other stories of the remarkable and profound changes made by a chance copy of the Bible could be given in a land where, according to Dr. G. G. Fraser, a register is kept in the Colonial Office at Pekin, showing that 160 incarnate gods have taken out licenses to practise divinity and perform miracles.

Market Day at Langowan, North Celebes Island.

The heaviest work of the Society so far has been caused by the sanguinary struggle between Japanese and Muscovite for the mastery of the Far East. Last year nearly 250,000 Gospels and Testaments were distributed to the Japanese troops on their way to the Front. The greater part of the distribution was effected at Hiroshima, the Japanese military headquarters, where most of the soldiers spent some time drilling before they embarked for Korea and Manchuria. The Bibles were taken from barracks to barracks in a hand-cart by Mr. Alexander Lawrence and his assistants, a long signboard, attached to the cart, explaining to all and sundry the nature of their work.

Mr. Lawrence had an opportunity of watching the training which has enabled the Japanese troops to accomplish such wonderful performances on the battlefield. Every day the soldiers had to march eighteen miles, equipped with full accoutrements, weighing 70lb., over some hills outside the town, which, with the eighteen miles back, formed a good test of their powers of endurance.

During the distribution of the Gospels an incident took place which is probably unique in the annals of Christian work in Asia. An officer marshalled about 500 men in a Buddhist temple, where the Gospels were given to them. Then the missionary, the Rev. W. Buchanan, of the Presbyterian Mission in Japan, was asked to deliver an address to the troops concerning the object of the Book, and the reason of its distribution. His address was given from the front of the Buddhist altar, the high priest and other servants of the temple being present. This is, undoubtedly, the first time that a Christian has been asked to address a heathen audience in a Buddhist temple in Japan.

Mr. Lawrence has a very practical way of selling the Bible in Japan. He sets his books out on a light table, after having obtained permission to fix his long signboard or placard to some convenient lamp-post or pillar. When a crowd has gathered, he holds up a Bible and begins by telling them that he has in his hand the most wonderful book in the world, which is being circulated in every land and in many languages. Then, after pointing out the nature of the special Japanese translation, he calls attention to its cheapness—

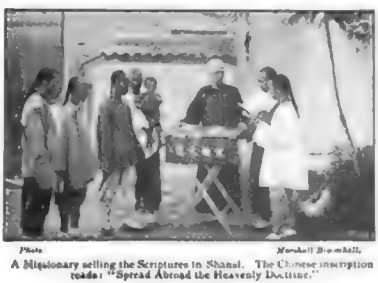
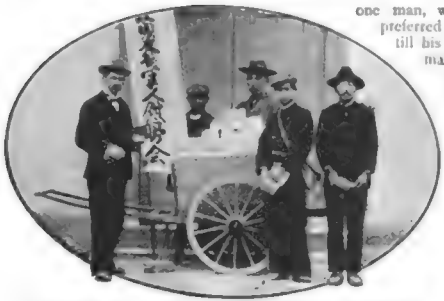


Photo Marshall Brownhill.

A Missionary selling the Scriptures in Shanai. The Chinese inscription reads: "Spread Abroad the Heavenly Doctrine."



The Society's agent at Hiroshima, and native colporteurs, with Gospels for the Japanese troops.

770 pages in a Testament which is sold for 1½d., and about 100 pages of the Gospel which is sold for a farthing.

The chief difficulty is to effect the first sale. The Japanese crowd is shy and cautious, preferring to follow someone's example rather than initiate one themselves, and they are like a flock of sheep—they will invariably follow the example of the first purchaser. If a complete set of the Gospels is sold at the beginning, then there is a brisk demand for similar sets, but if a single Gospel only is sold then there is small chance of selling a complete Testament.

The distribution of Gospels and Bibles is even more marked when we turn to the great Russian line of railway which lies between St. Petersburg and Manchuria. It is generally admitted that the religious Russian peasants, especially those who come from the provinces bordering the Baltic, went off to the Front most unwillingly.

The remark of one man, who, evidently, would have preferred to have stayed at home and till his fields, would be echoed by many of the soldiers of the Great White Tsar—"we are living just like beasts of the field, ay, and worse."

By men such as these a copy of the Gospel was hailed with joy and delight. The character of the officers and soldiers of the Imperial Guard is not that of the humbler fighting regiments. Many of the officers are sincerely religious men. At Marinsk a Russian colonel, who was accompanying his regiment to the Front, called upon Colporteur Evzieff, and ordered him to bring with him a stock of the smaller editions of the Gospels in Russ. Then he paraded his men, gave them an address on the beauty and grandeur of the New Testament, and announced that he would give each of his men a copy free.

"Take it, my children, take it," he said, "and try to be the salt of the earth!"

At Krasnoyarsk another Russian colonel watched a wounded man looking sadly at his last rouble, with which he wished to purchase a copy of the Russ Bible in large type. He then told the man to put his money back, and

An Arab colporteur selling the Scriptures to natives along the banks of the Nile.

presented him with the book he had envied. Then he gave instructions that all the wounded men in the camp should be supplied with a New Testament at his cost.

At Cheljabinsk, on the Siberian railway, east of the Urals, where all the transport trains stopped on their journey to the Front, a colporteur distributed 150 free copies of the Gospels to one regiment. Shortly after, fifteen men came up to him and said: "Brother, how can we express our gratitude?"

Before he had time to answer, one soldier cried: "Catch hold of him!"

The colporteur was hoisted on to their shoulders amid a cry of "Rock him!"

The next moment he was carried shoulder high along the line of troops whilst the latter cheered vigorously. This ceremony is the highest mark of Russian admiration.

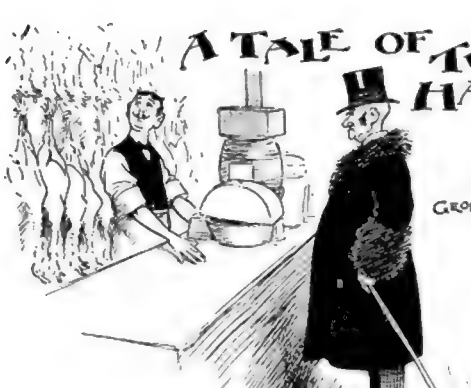
A touching proof of the value of the Society's services in Russian camps is the fact that its agents had permission to come and go freely, without any of the restrictions that were placed on other non-combatants.

But it is not only amid the soldiers that the servants of the Society have distributed the sacred Book. When the Baltic Fleet passed through the Suez Canal, colporteurs of the Society went aboard and sold some hundreds of copies. Then again at Shantung, in the harbour of Tsingtau, where the crews of the *Tsarevitch* and two Russian torpedo boats which were disarmed by the German authorities were, the Society supplied a New Testament to each member of the crews. Writing from Tsingtau, the Rev. C. J. Voskamp relates his experience aboard the *Tsarevitch* while distributing the copies of the Scriptures which had been forwarded by the Society. He was cordially received by the officers and by the Russian priest on board. The latter spoke only Russian, but showed much friendliness and kindness as the work of distribution to the sailors who came from the Baltic provinces went on.

Enough has been written in this all too brief article — when compared with the magnitude of the work it describes — to show the varied romance of the distribution of the Bible. The ideal of the Society is a vast one, and difficult of attainment—a vision of a time when every household on the earth shall possess at least one copy of the Scriptures.

No other society carries on its work at a financial loss. Its income during the first year was £691, and since then it has expended nearly thirteen and a half million sterling. It serves as a storehouse for missionaries all over the world, to whom it supplies Bibles in every tongue at less than cost price. All the great Protestant denominations are represented on its committee, and it is safe to say that without the Bible Society's aid the work of the Missionary Societies would be practically paralysed, since they cannot work without the Scriptures.

Selling the Scriptures in a Javanese Village.



A TALE OF TWO HAMPERS

BY GEORGE A. BEST.

The . . Story . of a . Mistake.

I.

It is perhaps better to possess great wealth and a poverty-stricken conscience, than to be the owner of many comfortable and eminently profitable things which do not include anything so intangible and non-negotiable as a mere moral conception of right and wrong.

To give grudgingly and sparingly at the dictates of duty is surely better for the well-being of one's own soul than to give away nothing at all. Yet a comparatively rich man who haggles with his conscience in this way is frequently regarded with more scorn by his neighbours, than is the reputed millionaire who frankly admits that his charities not only begin at home, but end there also.

Mr. Joshua Bunting, of Little Waygood, was the owner of many broad acres of the most lucrative kind—acres which had been purchased with the accumulated profits of a distinctly successful jam and pickle business in the Midlands. He was also the possessor of a conscience which, while it proved to be both inexorable and insistent up to a certain point, was distinctly tractable and amenable to reason after that point had been passed.

Little Waygood had assessed Joshua Bunting's income at £10,000 per annum, and he was reputed to be at once the richest and the best-hated man in the county of Wessex.

His charities were certainly numerous, but of more than doubtful quality; for the business instincts of Joshua (whose jams and pickles were certainly the cheapest on the market) had been carried into his private life, and allowed to dominate his public benevolence to an extent which was well calculated to disgust any charity tout who was not acquainted with the peculiar character and temperament of Mr. Bunting.

During an exceptionally severe winter the owner of Waygood Manor had supplied several tons of coal to the poor of his parish, and the poor had grumbled aloud because the fuel proved to be nothing more than the refuse of a dealer's yard, which resolutely declined to burn in the open grate of a cottage. And "Bunting's Soup Kitchen," opened by the Rector with a prayer for a blessing upon it, and presided over by the wife of the Curate, had proved an abortive failure, because the quality of the meat supplied was totally inadequate to cover the distinctive flavour of mouldy lentils and sea-damaged rice.

Other "benevolences," emanating from the same source, comprised a second-hand and most unreliable clock for the parish church of St. John the Martyr, a concert hall, built from the bricks of a demolished stable in the manor grounds and erected in

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a commanding position at the Little Waygood cross roads, and a plaster of Paris monument which announced to the world, in bold lettering, that it was "the gift of Joshua Bunting, Esq., to the memory of Charles Dodd, of this parish, who fell gloriously in the South African War."

Joshua's talent for buying in the cheapest markets was very apparent in his management of the domestic affairs at Little Waygood Manor, although the quality of the goods supplied for personal and family use and consumption was above suspicion. He purchased his supplies from the London stores, and every order, whether for boot-blacking or billiard tables, mouse-traps or motor-cars, was carefully scrutinised by the head of the Bunting household before being dispatched.

And with such marvellous foresight was this "shopping by post" conducted, that although Little Waygood lies some five miles away from the nearest railway station, and thirty-five from the Metropolis, not one of the local tradesmen could boast of handling a penny of Bunting's money.

His catering, too, was so perfect that the larder was never either inconveniently full, nor yet so alarmingly empty as to necessitate an emergency visit to the local supply stores. Joshua had made a life-long study of the law of supply and demand, and could calculate the household requirements with such exactness and nicety that, although he never parted with a shilling till the last moment, the outgoings and incomings were so admirably regulated that everything was provided in time to avert the famine which, to the uninitiated observer, frequently appeared to be imminent.

It was Joshua's custom to pay a personal visit to the London stores late in December, for the purpose of ordering in the Christmas supplies for Waygood Manor. The "good cheer" was most carefully selected in accordance with a list previously compiled, and the goods were packed in a huge hamper, which was seldom delivered at the Manor earlier than Christmas Eve, in order to avoid the possibility of its contents being surreptitiously and prematurely consumed by the servants or the younger members of the Bunting household. This somewhat risky arrangement had worked satisfactorily for eight years, but the advent of the ninth annual hamper proved a most disastrous exception to the rule.

On the morning of December 23rd of a certain year which will long be remembered in Little Waygood and elsewhere, on account of the exaggerated "seasonableness" of the weather, Mr. Joshua Bunting duly arrived at the stores, attired in a glossy silk hat and a fur-lined overcoat, and armed with his cheque-book and a particularly prodigal list of the requirements of the household for the great festival.

Beginning well at the poultry counter, Joshua secured the finest turkey on the premises—a thirty-two pounder, for which he paid the altogether fancy price of £2 15s. In the meat department he purchased a sirloin from a prize ox, and a prodigy in sucking-pigs, which, as the salesman humorously observed, would have made the fat boy of Peckham turn green with envy. From there Mr. Bunting drifted into the wine and spirit stores, where he selected a case of the finest champagne and a dozen bottles of rare old port. As the hamper grew in size and weight, Joshua became even more extravagant and reckless.

He bought six-inch bananas by the cluster, and a dozen pounds of hot-house grapes, as large as plums, at 7s. 6d. per pound. The tobacco department received a cheque for £5 in return for a hundred cigars, and the toy bazaar transferred to Mr. Bunting a complete railway system in miniature, an ironclad four feet in length, and a doll which could talk better and more intelligently than the average parrot, and walk a hundred yards with one winding.

For his wife, Joshua purchased a tea-gown trimmed with real Brussels lace, and for himself, as a pleasing memento of the most delightfully extravagant hour of his life, a meerschaum pipe, the bowl of which was supported on the wings of four beautifully carved angels.

When Mr. Bunting, feeling that he had, on this occasion, at least, established a record in generosity, was descending by lift from the fifth floor of the building, the poverty-stricken conscience, already referred to, arrested him quite suddenly, and in a most disagreeable way.

"What about Tom?" it whispered.

"Hang Tom!" answered Joshua mentally.

His lavish generosity had evaporated with remarkable rapidity; the delight of spending money was gone also. He felt strangely disinclined to re-open his cheque-book. Nevertheless, Joshua Bunting descended from the lift at the first floor, and again entered the poultry department.

Thomas Bunting was Joshua's only brother. He earned a precarious livelihood as a

draper's assistant, and was blessed with an abnormally large family. Joshua had visited them once or twice as a matter of duty. On these occasions he had taken in his brougham a parcel of cast-off clothing for Tom's use. Once he had left sixpence on the mantelpiece to be divided equally between the ten children.

Tom was a decent fellow, but dreadfully poor, and poverty was most obnoxious to Joshua. He lived in a vile neighbourhood, too, little better than a slum, and "slumming" did not appeal to Joshua. Why could he not forget Tom? Hang Tom! But Joshua was already standing again by the poultry counter, and the same assistant was awaiting his further orders with the same obsequious manner and the same rigid smile.

"Another turkey, sir? Yes, sir!" he said in answer to Joshua's order. "Sorry we haven't another thirty-two pounder for you. The next in size scales exactly twenty-eight pounds five ounces."

Joshua frowned, and raised his hand with a gesture of impatience.

"I require a small bird this time," he said. "It's for a—a present, and I want it packed in a separate hamper and dispatched, with a few other things, to Mr. Thomas Bunting, 15 Cross Street, Hoxton."

The assistant glanced thoughtfully at the tiers of corpses above his head.

"Something about twelve pounds, sir?" he began. "An English bird, of course?"

"No, no!" ejaculated Joshua impatiently. "It need not be English. Have you any about seven pounds in weight? That will be plenty large enough."

The assistant successfully hooked a small bird and brought it down.

"Seven pounds nine ounces," he announced, referring to the ticket. "That is about the smallest we have, sir. Six and ninepence halfpenny."

"Rather more than I care to give," said Mr. Bunting. "Have you nothing cheaper?"

Again the assistant glanced heavenwards.

"Would it matter if the bird was a little—er—bruised, sir?" he asked doubtfully.

"Not at all," answered Joshua. "It'll eat quite as well, I suppose?"

"Equally well, sir, it's merely a matter of appearance," replied the assistant, probing with his hook in a dark corner of the ceiling. "What about this one—seven pounds three ounces—four and sixpence?"

The bird bumped down on the counter, and Joshua glanced at it hastily and turned away his head.

"Wrap it up," he ordered briefly.

"Thank you, sir," said the assistant. "Fifteen, Cross Street, Hoxton, is the address, I think? Same name as yours, and to be delivered early to-morrow. And the next thing, please?"

"Nothing else here," said Mr. Bunting, moving away into the adjoining wine and spirit department. He paused on the threshold of the shop in an attitude suggestive of deep thought.

"Are you being attended to, sir?" asked the shop-walker.

Joshua looked up sharply.

"I was just wondering what poor people drink at Christmas time," he remarked.

"Champagne if they don't have to pay for it themselves—gin if they do," answered the shop-walker humorously.

And Joshua took the hint and ordered a bottle of the cheapest gin. His charity purchases in the other departments included sixpennyworth of oranges at twenty for a shilling, a bunch of the cheapest grapes, two pounds of monkey-nuts, an aitch-bone of American beef, and a dozen penny toys for the children.

Then, feeling exceptionally virtuous, the master of Waygood Manor entered his brougham and sat cosily back amongst the luxurious cushions, with half-closed eyes, to dream of Tom's delight when the hamper arrived. And as Joshua dreamt he smiled. The expression on his face was not a particularly soft one perhaps, but even a hard smile is better than none at all.

II.

The train service to Little Waygood Junction was much disorganised on the following day (Christmas Eve) by an exceptionally heavy fall of snow. The 11.15 a.m. express from Waterloo had arrived at the little country station nearly two hours late, and there was no hamper for the Manor.

Joshua's groom, who had been waiting outside the Station Hotel for several hours, alternately flapping his arms and anathematising his master's shopping methods, eventually drove home through the rapidly falling snow with the startling intelligence that no package had arrived from the stores, and that the next down train was not due until 3.25.

Mrs. Bunting did not openly express her opinions upon Joshua's arrangements, but she frequently elevated her eyebrows and shrugged her shoulders in an exasperating way, which proved far more eloquently than mere words

could do that her mental criticisms were the reverse of complimentary.

And the situation was not improved by the irritating restlessness of Joshua's eldest son, who kept peeping into the drawing-room and making shrill inquiries as to what would happen if the hamper didn't arrive at all!

"Is it a big hamper, dad?" he asked for the twentieth time that day.

Mr. Bunting stamped his foot impatiently.

"You'd better go back to the nursery and stay there, Leslie," he said. "I'm afraid you're getting a very greedy little boy. One would think to hear you speak that you lived in an attic, and had never seen a Christmas hamper in your life!"

timely arrival of the hamper that he laid a shilling on the table without demur.

"Give the man that, Mary," he said, "and you'd better ask him to help you carry the hamper into the kitchen. If it's too heavy for you both, get the butler to lend a hand."

"That's all right, sir," said Mary cheerfully. "It isn't at all 'eavy. I carried it into the kitchen meself."

Mrs. Bunting glanced inquiringly at her husband, and again raised her eyebrows.

"I tell you it's an enormous hamper!" cried Joshua fiercely. "It must weigh several hundredweight."

"Well, we'd better go out and look at it," said Mrs. Bunting. "Perhaps the things ave been packed in several different hampers, and this is only the first instalment."

"Silence!" thundered Mr. Bunting. "What is the meaning of this?"

Leslie turned to obey his father's command, but paused at the door to ask another question.

"Don't people who live in attics ever have hampers, then?"

"Only when they are supplied by the thoughtfulness of kind relations, Leslie."

"Are *you* a 'kind relation,' dad?"

The question remained unanswered, for at that moment the housemaid appeared at the doorway.

"Please, sir, there's a 'amper in the 'all, an' the carrier says 'e wants 'is Christmas-box," she announced.

Mr. Bunting was so much relieved by the

"Oh! no, ma'am! The carrier says there's nothing else," declared the housemaid. "And it's quite a little basket, as you can see for yourselves."

Joshua rose hurriedly from his seat and strode into the kitchen, followed by Mrs. Bunting and the housemaid. The carrier was standing by the dresser as the procession entered.

"A merry Christmas, ladies and gentlemen all," he remarked genially. "Christmases come and Christmases go, but——"

"Silence!" thundered Mr. Bunting. "What is the meaning of this?"

"Wot is the meanin' of wot, sir?" asked the carrier helplessly.

"That!" cried Joshua, pointing to the little hamper which stood on the table.

"It's a hamper, consigned to Joshua Bunting, Esq., of Waygood Manor, Little Waygood, with care, to be kept dry, this side up," replied the carrier, referring to the label. "I've kep' it dry, right side up, and 'andled it with great care," he added anxiously. "Wot's wrong?"

"Give me that shilling back, Mary!" cried Joshua. "I'm not giving anything away at present! You can go!" he added fiercely to the carrier. The man retired grumbling;

"They've made a mistake!" he roared. "A stupid, idiotic, criminal blunder! *This is Tom's hamper, and he's got mine!*"

"But are you sure?" asked Mrs. Bunting. "You never even told me that you had sent a hamper to your brother."

"I'm not always boasting about my charities!" snapped Joshua, closing the lid hastily. "This is the result of generosity, the reward of displaying a thoughtful regard for the well-being of others. Some fool at the stores has mixed up the labels, and a hamper containing £40 worth of goods has been sent to Hoxton!"

"Can I do anything, sir?" asked the

Mr. Bunting left his man under the car, and . . . reached the station on foot.

and as Bunting cut the cord of the hamper with a carving-knife, a silence that could be felt fell upon the little party gathered around the table, a silence broken only by the voice of the kitchen-clock, which struck five with great solemnity and deliberation.

Joshua forced open the lid, and drew into daylight an emaciated bird, bruised and half flayed.

Mrs. Bunting and the housemaid both burst into shrieks of hysterical laughter. Joshua laughed, too, but the effort turned his face purple. He was trembling so violently that the bag in his hand burst, and a score of monkey-nuts rained down on to the table.

housemaid, feeling that she ought to say something.

"You can hold your tongue and stop grinning!" snarled Joshua.

"There's scarcely anything eatable or drinkable in the house, Joshua," said Mrs. Bunting. "At Christmas time, too! We shall either have to obtain our supplies from the village, or else live on that rather doubtful testimonial of your thoughtful regard for the well-being of others!"

And Mrs. Bunting pointed to the emaciated turkey as she spoke.

"We shall do neither," said Joshua with decision. "There is an express up to

London at 6.15 which will land me at Waterloo before seven. I intend to motor to Waygood Junction and catch that train at any cost. If the stores are closed when I arrive, I shall take a cab to Hoxton and bring the hamper—my hamper—back with me. If Tom is not a born idiot he'll have the decency and good sense to realise that a mistake has been made."

Mr. Bunting's car was driven through the blinding snow with such recklessness that the *chauffeur*, who was supposed to be keeping a sharp look-out ahead, simply closed his eyes and abandoned himself to fate.

And the car itself, after cutting its way through the sixth snow-drift, finally gave up the ghost and subsided into silence within a mile of Waygood Junction. The *chauffeur* applied the usual remedies to restore animation without producing any visible effect; so Mr. Bunting left his man under the car, and, attired as he was in a heavy motor coat, reached the station on foot within seven minutes of the breakdown.

The station-master touched his cap respectfully as Joshua approached.

"Awful weather, sir, isn't it?" he remarked with a dramatic shiver.

Joshua nodded impatiently. He was panting noisily, just as his own motor was wont to do, when the car was suddenly brought to a standstill after a long run.

"Yes, yes," he said at length. "But the train—the up-express, has it gone? Why is the booking-office closed?"

"Because both the up and the down lines are blocked, sir," replied the station-master. "There are three trains snowed up between here and London!"

"Snowed up!" gasped Joshua. "Then how in the name of goodness am I to reach London? I tell you, man, that I *must* get to Waterloo to-night," he continued illogically, "even if I have to engage a special."

"Even a special couldn't be persuaded to run over the heads of the other trains, sir," suggested the other deferentially.

"I suppose not," acknowledged Joshua more sanely; "but what am I to do? My motor-car has broken down a mile away from here, and although my man has probably put the thing right by this time, it's more than likely that the roads are quite impassable."

"I hope there's nothing serious the matter, sir?" inquired the station-master. "Not a death in the family or anything like that?"

"No, no, it's nothing of that kind," said Mr. Bunting hurriedly. "A stupid mistake referring to the delivery of some goods, that's all."

Joshua tramped back to the spot at which he had left his motor, talking savagely to himself on the way. The man was still beneath the body of the vehicle when his master re-appeared. He had been enjoying a rest under the scanty shelter afforded by the car, but he made a feeble pretence of using his tools as Joshua approached.

And while the *chauffeur* plied his spanner with frost-bitten fingers, Mr. Bunting sat in the car, and waited impatiently for that welcome tremor of the machinery which is the first sign of returning animation.

It was an hour before the motor began to hum again, and then so feebly did the heart of the great machine beat that the return journey to Waygood Manor occupied seventy-five minutes. The clock was striking ten as Joshua entered the dining room.

"We shall have to patronise the local shops after all," he said wearily. "I'll write out an order at once."

Mrs. Bunting looked up from the Christmas story she was reading, and smiled with some bitterness.

"You can save yourself that trouble, Joshua," she replied. "I've already sent Mary into the village in search of food, and she has returned empty-handed. The provision merchant has shut up his shop and gone away to London for his Christmas holidays; both the butcher and the poulterer have completely sold out! For the next few days we shall have to live on charity—your charity, Joshua!"

And Mr. Bunting dropped limply into a chair and groaned aloud at the awful vision which those few words had conjured up in his mind.

III.

The battered turkey and the alien aitch-bone of beef duly appeared on the festive board at Waygood Manor, but Joshua would have none of them. He had a meagre luncheon of bread and cheese sent up to his study on Christmas Day; and having been informed by his coachman that the railway service to London was once more open, Mr. Bunting caught the first available train, and arrived at 15 Cross Street, Hoxton, just before sunset.

Joshua's coachman and butler had both sent in their resignations earlier in the day, and Mrs. Bunting had received similar notices from the maid-servants. The unseasonable famine, for which the master was entirely

responsible, had been regarded in anything but a humorous light in the kitchen, although some little merriment had been caused by a game of "catch-ball" between the butler and the cook, in which the lean turkey figured prominently.

The sarcastic comments of the servants, who had sent up to the dining-room a pound of sawdust-covered grapes and monkey nuts, most ostentatiously arranged on a solid silver epergne and followed by a peal of ironical laughter from below stairs, had not tended to improve Joshua's temper, and his ferocious knock at the door of No. 15 Cross Street brought about an immediate cessation of the sounds of revelry from within.

Thomas Bunting himself appeared at the door, timidly followed by his wife.

"Hallo, Joshua, is it you?" exclaimed Tom. "Come in, old fellow, and a merry Christmas to you!"

Joshua muttered incoherently, and followed his brother into the tiny living-room which lay at the end of a dark and narrow passage. Mrs. Thomas Bunting struck a match just as Joshua collided violently with the bannisters. The meagre light revealed a slim figure attired in a tea-gown trimmed with real Brussels lace! Joshua gnashed his teeth and entered the room.

The skeleton of a thirty-two pound turkey lay on two semi-detached dishes on the table, in company with half-a-dozen empty champagne bottles. On the crazy chiffonier stood a wash-hand basin filled to overflowing with hothouse grapes and bananas. Tom himself was smoking a beautiful meerschaum pipe, and the wings of the four angels which supported the bowl were already losing their pristine purity.

"We've had a hamper, Josh! Such a splendid hamper!" began Tom eagerly. "It contained everything you could possibly think of—ten times as much as we could eat ourselves, so we invited half-a-dozen neighbours in to dinner. They *have* enjoyed themselves!"

Joshua's eyes bulged, and his lips moved convulsively.

"And the children were not forgotten, either!" added Mrs. Tom, with tears of joy in her eyes. "They're all in the kitchen playing with toys as big as themselves! There's a big tin ship, and a train with real signals, and—"

"I know all about it!" interrupted Joshua fiercely. "Pray don't describe the contents to me—it was my hamper!"

"Yours!" ejaculated Mr. and Mrs. Tom in chorus.

"Of course," snapped Joshua. "Didn't you understand that——"

"I should never have thought it of you, Joshua—never!" interrupted Tom hoarsely. "Forgive me for having so misjudged you. We thought——"

"It was someone else," added Mrs. Tom hastily. "I'm so glad to think that you remembered Tom and all of us, and if you could only have seen our delight when the things were unpacked, one by one, I'm sure that your generosity would have been amply repaid. And the turkey! Wasn't it grand, Tom?"

Tom nodded and coughed violently. A tear ran slowly down his haggard cheeks.

"I thank you, Joshua—my brother, from the bottom of my heart!" he said brokenly.

"But I don't want your thanks," began Joshua uncomfortably. "The fact is——"

"Tom realises that he's misjudged you," hazarded the little woman with a happy smile. "He should have known you better. And now you really must let me kiss you for this lovely gown. I've never seen anything half so beautiful before."

She rose and approached Joshua with a beaming face. "I'm sure Tom won't be jealous," she said.

"Pray don't!" exclaimed Joshua, waving her back with his hand. "I must tell you at once that——"

"You don't wish to be thanked," interrupted Tom, "but you've just dropped in to see how happy we all are. That's it, isn't it, Joshua?"

"Hardly," answered Joshua. "The true facts of the case are these. When I ordered that hamper it was intended for——"

"A surprise, of course," broke in Mrs. Tom, clapping her hands. "And a surprise it was, if you like! Wasn't it, Tom?"

Tom nodded again, and, rising, grasped his brother heartily by the hand.

"At least you'll allow the little ones to thank you, Joshua?" he said earnestly. "But you really shouldn't have spent so much money on them, old boy," he continued in half-hearted remonstrance.

"I never intended to do so," growled Joshua truthfully. "When I gave my order——"

"You allowed your generosity to run away with you," added Tom. "Quite so, I understand perfectly. I've done the same thing myself, on a smaller scale, of course. But Heavens, man! What an awful lot of money that hamper must have cost you altogether."

"It did," said Joshua ruefully. "But, to

make a clean breast of it, Tom, I must tell you—what you should certainly have guessed by this time—that I——"

"Derived even more happiness in dispatching the hamper than we did in receiving it," added Mrs. Tom. "That is the usual story of the modest philanthropist, but we don't believe it, do we, Tom?"

"Not much," replied Tom with a merry laugh. "Have a cigar, old chap?" he continued, handing the half-emptied box to Joshua. "They're really excellent; I must congratulate you upon your judgment. And you'll take a glass of good old port, won't you? It's simply the wine of the Gods! I suppose you've got some of the same vintage at the Manor?"

"No, we haven't," said Joshua, shutting his lips tightly as he thought of the solitary bottle of Old Tom, at home.

A little girl, with large brown eyes and wavy black hair, entered the room at this moment. She was hugging a magnificently dressed doll nearly as big as herself.

"Mother says you bought me this beautiful dolly, because I've been such a good little girl," she said gravely, addressing Joshua. "And I'm going to give you a big kiss for it, and then you must come out into the kitchen and help the boys to play with their steam-engine. We're calling the station Waygood Junction, and Billy has named the engine 'Uncle Joshua,' after you."

Mr. Bunting hesitated for a moment and then took the child on his knee and kissed her on both cheeks. He smiled for the first time in twenty-four hours, and he laughed quite genially for the first time in as many years.

"I'll come out and see the engine, Kathleen," he said kindly, "and then I must go home to my own little ones."

Kathleen looked up at her "kind uncle" with widely-opened eyes.

"Have you left them alone on Christmas Day on purpose to come here and see us?" she asked wonderingly.

"Yes," answered Joshua, averting his face.

"Mother says you bought me this beautiful dolly, because I've been such a good little girl," she said gravely.

"And you didn't go to see anybody else in London, first?" she asked suspiciously.

"No, Kathleen, I came straight here."

"As quick as ever you could?"

"Yes, I was in a great hurry, little one."

"Well, it's really awfully good of you," said the little maiden solemnly. "But you must go home again as soon as ever you've had a game with the engine, or you'll spoil the happy Christmas of your own little boys and girls," she added in an impressive whisper.

So Joshua, after playing the part of pointsman at "New Waygood Junction" for a full hour, took Kathleen's hint—and the last train home.

* * * * *

"I have decided to deal only with the local tradesmen in future," announced Joshua early on the following morning.

And Mrs. Joshua Bunting, of Waygood Manor, to whom the remark was addressed, smiled just as enigmatically as did her poor sister-in-law in Hoxton when Mr. Thomas Bunting remarked that Joshua was the kindest-hearted fellow in the whole world.

MR. X —HIS PAGES.

Being—Popular Pages of Perplexing Problems, Puns, Puzzles, and Playful Posers. Propounded for the Perusal of Perspicacious Persons, Particularly those Pining to Procure Puzzle Penknives, Puzzle Purses, and Packs of Playing Cards.

Puzzle Penknives, Puzzle Purses, or Royal Packs of Playing Cards will be given as prizes to readers who forward new puzzles, problems, or other tricks which are inserted in this feature. Any readers communicating with "Mr. X" and wishing for a reply, should enclose a stamped, addressed envelope. All letters should be addressed to "Mr. X" care of The Royal Magazine, 18 Henrietta Street, London, W.C.

For "Mr. X's" Address-Book.

In "Mr. X's" address-book stands, under the letter **U**, the following entry:

Wood
John
Hants.

Why under U? you ask. Why, because the address is—

John Underwood,
Andover,
Hants.

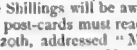
Now, who will send "Mr. X" some more cryptic addresses? To the contributor of what is, in "Mr. X's" opinion, the best, a prize of Five Shillings will be awarded.

Letters or post-cards must reach "Mr. X" by January 20th, addressed "Mr. X," care of The Royal Magazine, Henrietta Street, London, W.C., and marked on the outside, "Address."

At a Greengrocer's.

Miss Lettuce: "By the way, who gave the mushroom?"

Mr. Flower: "Oh, the cabbage-rose."



A Question.

Nobody has ever seen it.
Many have heard it.
It is of a very retiring nature.
Because it will never speak unless spoken to.
But it is very polite.
Because it will always answer when spoken to.
What is it?

A Shameful Quibble.

Jones: "Have you ever seen a cherry-coloured cat with rose-coloured paws?

Robinson: "Of course not, you idiot."

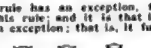
Jones: "What? Never seen a black cat with white paws?"

[I don't see the joke.—Ed. Royal.
The point is that some cherries are black and some roses white.—"Mr. X."
Do you call that a joke?—Ed. Royal.
No. A fact.—"Mr. X."]

Slightly Bewildering.

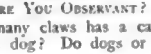
"There is no rule without an exception." What is the exception to the rule contained in this statement?

Since every rule has an exception, there is an exception to this rule; and it is that it is itself a rule without an exception: that is, it furnishes its own exception.



At Tea-time.

Next time you are at an afternoon tea-party you can cause considerable amusement by requesting the company to estimate what proportion of their respective tea-spoons will be covered by tea when placed upright in their tea-cups. In nearly every case the estimate will be found ludicrously inaccurate.



Are You Observant?

1. How many claws has a cat? How many has a dog? Do dogs or cats have eyelashes?

2. How many claws has a canary bird?

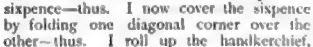
3. Which of the feet of a horse touch the ground simultaneously in trotting? Or in what order do the feet move?

4. How many ribs are there in the cover of an umbrella?

The Vanishing Sixpence.

'Ladies and Gentlemen, I lay my handkerchief flat open upon the table—thus. In the centre of the handkerchief I place a sixpence—thus. I now cover the sixpence by folding one diagonal corner over the other—thus. I roll up the handkerchief, take one end, pull the handkerchief flat again—and, good gracious me! where's the sixpence?'

When folding the handkerchief, make the



upper corner overlap the lower corner. Now begin to make a roll, and continue rolling until the point of the underneath flap (B) appears. By means of this corner unroll the handkerchief—the sixpence will lie beneath it; to the audience the coin will seem to have disappeared.

N.B.—Be careful to perform this trick on a table covered by a thick cloth. Otherwise the sixpence will drop with a rattle.

A Very Poor Taste.

Smith: "I'll bet you a shilling you won't answer 'paper' to any three questions I ask you."

Brown: "Done."

Smith: "What did you have for breakfast this morning?"

Brown: "Paper."

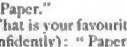
Smith: "What is your favourite vegetable?"

Brown (confidently): "Paper."

Smith: "Which would you rather have, a shilling or paper?"

Brown: "Paper."

Smith: "Right; then I'll keep the shilling, old man."



With a Draught-board.

Can you place eight draughtsmen on a draught-board in such a manner that no two will be directly opposite one another either horizontally or diagonally? The draughts must, of course, be placed properly on the squares.

Quite True.

Jones: "A regular made-up affair, that's what I call it."

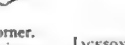
Smith: "What is?"

Jones: "A patch-work quilt."

A Spelling Catch.

Spell out to someone these syllables: so so, in-e-t met, i-m im, e-s es, and ask what the whole word makes. You will hear many extraordinary pronunciations of the simple word **sometimes.**

Q. What is that which is shut when it is open, and open when it is shut?
A. A railway level-crossing.



Habitués.

Jackson (looking up from his newspaper): "Fancy, there will be ten thousand people in Manchester to-morrow."

Thompson: "What's on?"

Jackson: "Oh, they live there, that's all."

A Sage Little Bit.

Wager a friend that he will not guess the British coin which, placed on its edge, will nearest equal the height of twelve pennies placed in a heap. He is almost certain to name a half-crown or a florin. To his surprise and (as you collect the bet) his sorrow, you will show him that a sixpence falls just under the height. A shilling goes considerably above it.

PARADOXICAL.

A noun there is of plural number,
A foe to ease and peaceful slumber—
Now, any other noun you take,
By adding "s" you plural make.
But if you add an "s" to this
(Strange is the metamorphosis),
Plural is plural now no more,
And sweet what bitter was before.

Dense.

Uppingham: "I say, you've heard of Michaelson, haven't you?"

Bacon: "No."

Uppingham: "Well, my dear chap, you must be deaf, because I've just mentioned him."

RESULTS.

Three Squares.—In the October Royal "Mr. X" offered a prize of Five Shillings for what he considered the best "nine re-words" built on the words Royal, Ratio and Zoyal. Thanks are awarded to Mr. F. E. Archer, 9 Lawn Crescent, Kew Gardens; prize-winners, postal-packet, or Royal, as to (having cards for) Mr. N. R. Bis. Byles, Rose Farrow-on-Tyne, Mr. Arthur Thornton, Jun., 71 Eyre Street, Peterhead, N.B., and Miss Florence Thompson, 39 Queen Anne's Gate, London, S.W.

A Question.—Echo.

Paradoxical.—Cards, Cards.

THE CAPTAIN IN THE CUPBOARD

How a Girl Obtained Her Revenge

By E. R. Punshon.

"I TELL you frankly," cried Captain Henry Valentine, banging his gloves on the table to emphasise his words, "that I absolutely refuse to marry on any pretext or consideration whatever."

And as he spoke he glared with quite unnecessary ferocity at the small, frail-looking girl with the white face and the big eyes who had just entered the room. As she made no answer, he went on vehemently:

"The mere idea is absurd—worse than absurd, it's ridiculous. The very moment I heard of it I came straight down here to see you and tell you so. Once for all, madam, I refuse—I absolutely refuse—to marry you or anyone else. The thing," he concluded in a climax of rage, "is worse than ridiculous—it's—it's absurd."

"But—" began the girl, who seemed a very small person to excite so much wrathful indignation, and whose big eyes were growing rounder and rounder all the time. "I——"

"It's no good talking," interrupted Valentine, who was now relieving his feelings by walking up and down the room at a tremendous pace and with his very longest stride, "Aunt Tabby had no earthly business to behave as she seems to have been doing. It was only because she worried me so that I ever said I had any idea of marrying. As a matter of fact, a soldier married is a soldier spoilt, and probably I shall never marry at all. A nice thing," he cried indignantly, "for a fellow to come home from foreign service and find his aunt has as good as arranged for him to marry a girl he has never seen. Once for all, Miss Warren, I'll have nothing to do with it."

"Yes, but—" began the girl again, and again he interrupted her, resuming his hasty march up and down the room.

"I can't imagine what Aunt Tabby was thinking of," he continued in the same angry, excited tones. "She seems to have said all sorts of things. She told you I am rich, and I am not; she told me you were tall and handsome, and you——"

"Her errors went still further," returned the girl, with a sudden stiffening of her slight form that seemed to add several inches to her height; "she said you were a gentleman, for instance."

Captain Valentine stopped, with a certain abruptness, his angry pacing up and down the room, and looked at her rather blankly. Hitherto he had simply had an impression of a slight, youthful figure, almost hidden by a very large and plain white apron, and a pale, thin face that seemed all eyes. Now he began to see that this slight figure was singularly

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graceful, and that the pale, thin face had a complexion of wonderful purity, and features of the greatest delicacy. The big eyes, too, could, it seemed, shine like twin stars, and certainly the small head, crowned with such masses of silky brown hair, was set on a neck and shoulders of almost absolute perfection. Captain Valentine's opinion of his aunt's judgment began to rise, and, while still as determined as ever to defend his bachelorship against all comers, he began to wish he had expressed his resolve more mildly.

"I say — Miss Warren," he said, a little hesitatingly, "I didn't — er — mean—you know, not at all——"

"Ah," she said icily, "I did."

Captain Valentine picked up his gloves from the table, and looked at them meditatively. It began to dawn upon him that this little, angry figure in the doorway was one of the most attractive girls he had ever met; and he reflected that, between marrying a lady and violently quarrelling with her, there are many pleasant stages of friendship and acquaintance on which it is possible for a man to rest securely. He still objected vehemently to his aunt's plan that had been sprung upon him with such startling suddenness, but he now saw no reason why he and Miss Warren should not be friends—even intimate friends. Undoubtedly she was extremely pretty, even if the description of her as "tall and handsome" were ridiculously inappropriate.

"Pray don't let me detain you," observed the girl, breaking in upon his meditations with an extreme politeness which, it is to be feared, she seldom reached in other and calmer moments; "I imagine you have said all you came to say?"

"Well—er—" remarked the captain, wincing a little, "I am afraid you—er—may have perhaps not quite—er—understood."

"I can't imagine what Aunt Tabby was thinking of," he continued.

"Oh, I assure you your remarks were far too clear and forcible to be misunderstood," she returned quickly. "May I express with equal force, and, I trust, greater courtesy, my own determination never, never, never to marry you? There is nothing more, I think, that needs to be said on either side."

"Um—ah," said Valentine, pulling his moustache doubtfully. He felt there was a

good deal more to be said, but he had not the least idea how to say it. Only he was fully determined not to part on these terms of anger from this beautiful, indignant girl, with the flashing eyes and the cheeks with a little burning spot of red in the centre of each one.

"Hang it all, Miss Warren," he burst out, "I don't think it is very kind of you to be so jolly hard on a fellow."

"I beg your pardon," said the girl, taken aback at this sudden onslaught; "I don't——"

"If I am down," said Valentine pathetically, pursuing his advantage, "I think it's a little unfair to kick me quite so hard."

"But I haven't kicked you," she argued. "I couldn't think of such a thing," she added, drawing back her skirt as if to show how guiltless of such offence were her little feet in their small, well-fitting shoes.

"I daresay," pursued Valentine gloomily, "that some people find a pleasure in trampling on poor fellows who can't hit back, but it is not worthy of you, Miss Warren," he said, shaking his head at her reproachfully, "it's not, indeed."

"Well," she retorted with exasperation, "I don't stamp and rave about the room, anyhow."

"No, but you make no allowance for my feelings on finding that old Aunt Tabby——"

"That," she interrupted severely, "is not a fitting way in which to speak of Lady Tabitha Warren."

"Well, then," he said, accepting her correction with much meekness, "that Lady Tabitha, my respected aunt, had engaged me to someone I had never seen. Of course, if I had seen you——"

"Well?" she asked, daring him with her eyes to pay her even the tiniest compliment imaginable.

"It would have been different," he concluded lamely, shrinking from her challenge with absolute cowardice.

"Strange," she remarked, "for I have seen you and I do not find it at all different."

"Um—ah," said the captain, pulling his moustache and deciding it would be wiser not to ask her what she meant. "You might try to make allowance for a chap," he added with pathos. "I assure you when I went to my club they congratulated me."

"How dreadful!" she remarked sympathetically.

"Not at all—now," said Captain Valentine.

"Well, permit me," she said with great stiffness, "to draw your attention to one or two minor points. In the first place, please understand that, for my part, in no circumstances should I ever care to marry a man like you. My objection is as profound as your own."

"Yes, you said that before," complained the captain, who thought she showed an undue tendency to harp upon this point.

"In the second place," she continued, "if Lady Tabitha described Miss Warren as being tall and handsome, while I am neither, does it not suggest itself to you that possibly the mistake is yours and not hers?"

"What do you mean?" gasped Captain Valentine. "Are you not——?"

"Certainly not," she replied calmly. "I simply came up to inform you that Miss Warren was out, but instead of listening you began to shout and storm, and bang your gloves on the table, and generally carry on."

"Holy Moses!" said Captain Valentine, and he sat down heavily on the nearest chair. "Then who are you?" he inquired wildly. "Not——" he added, as for the first time he took in the significance of the big apron.

"Yes," she answered, noting his quick glance, "I am the cook here. My name is Brown—Mary Brown."

"Oh, a lady cook," he breathed softly and sadly. "Brown—Mary Brown—a cook."

"Well, why don't you go?" she inquired, after another interval occupied on his part by profound meditation.

"Because," he answered, rallying gallantly, "whoever you are I was abominably rude to you, and you have not yet said that you accept my apologies."

"Gracious," exclaimed Miss Brown, "here is Miss Warren coming back," and, following the startled glance the girl gave, Captain Valentine saw a young lady, who certainly better answered to the description of tall and handsome, coming slowly up the garden path. "I must fly," cried Mary Brown, "there's a cake in the kitchen that ought to be in the oven by now."

She fled towards the door, and for a moment Captain Valentine hesitated. Then he called after her:

"One moment, Miss Brown—just one moment."

But she slipped away into the passage without pausing an instant; there was something of grace and beauty in her movements that touched him with a sudden sense of pity that so much youth and charm should be

spent on working for a living in such a way.

"Excuse me," he said, still following her, but she was at the head of the kitchen stairs now.

"I daren't stop," she called hurriedly, "but you can come down if you like. Miss Warren is very good about my visitors," she added innocently.

Captain Valentine winced, but proceeded. It was a gallant action, but when he reached the kitchen he felt himself fully repaid. For never had he seen a more lovely picture than that presented by this girl as she whisked to and fro in the bright, pleasant-looking kitchen, doing mysterious things with jugs and cups and basins, using a large and floury spoon like a magic wand to evolve order from chaos, and, as Captain Valentine vaguely understood, an ultimate cake from the confusion of raisins and currants, and broken eggs in cups, and tins of lemon peel and flavouring and what not that adorned the table. It was a slight relief to his feelings, however, to find there was no one else in the kitchen, the elderly woman who had admitted him having disappeared.

"Like lemon peel?" asked Miss Brown, who seemed to put nearly as much of that dainty into her own small mouth as into her cake.

"Awfully," declared Valentine. "Do you—er—eat it raw?" he inquired cautiously, as she handed him some.

"Why, of course," she returned, "but you had no business to come down here," she added; "Miss Warren will think it queer; and you have to tell her, you know, that you absolutely decline to marry her on any consideration whatever."

"I think I shall write this time," he answered meekly.

"But do you think you could be emphatic enough in writing?" she inquired interestedly; "you can't bang your gloves on the table in a letter, you know."

"Look here," he suggested, "can't we drop it? Let us talk about something else for a change. If it is not too impertinent a question, I am wondering very much how it is you came to take up work like this?"

"Well," she remarked, "so long as there are dinners there must be cooks, mustn't there?"

"Of course," he agreed; "still it is not work that ladies often take up, and I was wondering if you had never thought of getting something more congenial," and, as he spoke, his eyes said so much more than his words, that, all of a sudden, Miss Brown felt a sudden embarrassment creep over her—quite a new sensation for that singularly self-possessed young lady. It made her more angry with Captain Valentine than ever.

"I think you had better go now," she said hurriedly.

Captain Valentine did not stir. He felt he had been in the habit of absurdly overestimating the advantages of bachelorship, and he perceived that Lady Tabitha had been by no means so mistaken in her general principles as he had imagined. It was only in her application of them to the particular that she had erred. He endeavoured to make this clear to Miss Brown, but he was interrupted by a clear, rather loud voice from above.

"Mary," it called, "wherever are you, Mary?"

"That's Miss Warren," said Miss Brown in a hurried whisper. "My mistress, you know. I am here, ma'am," she called back, going to the door.

"Haven't you got that cake in the oven yet?" demanded the voice above in discontented accents.

"No, ma'am," said Mary meekly.

"Well, you have been a jolly long time about it," grumbled the unseen, and next moment came the sound of a step on the stair.

"Gracious," cried Mary in a panic; "she is coming down—whatever shall I do?"

"Nothing," said Captain Valentine bravely, though feeling more uncomfortable than he cared to admit.

"But it is as much as my place is worth," declared Mary, wringing her hands tragically. "If Miss Warren finds you here she will think—oh, oh, oh——"

She showed an alarming tendency to weep, and looked prettier than ever in her distress, while the slow footsteps, which had paused in their descent for a moment, became audible again.

"I say, don't look like that," said Valentine hurriedly; "I'll explain."

"The more you explain, the worse she'll think it," sobbed Mary, "and I shall be sent away without a character, and never get another place, and die of starvation and cold in the streets."

"Can't I get away?" asked the captain, much moved by this tragic picture she had summoned up. The slow and heavy steps were very near now, and he felt Mary had been quite right in saying that explanations from him would only make things worse for

her. He looked helplessly at the kitchen window, which was barred, and then at the door, which only led into a passage commanded from the stairs Miss Warren was descending. "Can't I get away?" he repeated desperately.

"No, but you can hide," cried Mary, as one having a sudden inspiration. She glanced round the kitchen, and her fateful eyes fell on two small cupboards, one above the other — the uppermost devoted to china and glass, the lower to various miscellaneous household requisites. "In there," said Mary hurriedly.

"Quick," she added.

"But I—I don't think there is room," faltered the captain, contemplating with dismay the murky recesses she exposed to his view, and by no means certain that he could squeeze his five feet eleven inches long body into this four feet six inches high cupboard.

"Try," she urged; "please try."

With an inward groan Captain Henry Valentine doubled himself up and dived, and on him as he disappeared Mary Brown hurriedly banged the door and locked it. She slipped the key into her pocket and turned away just as Miss Warren entered and sat herself down opposite the fire, at which she gazed with an air of deep melancholy and reproach.

Mary Brown hurriedly banged the door and locked it.

"He has not come," she announced presently.

"I think I have a cold," observed Mary loudly, "I feel so deaf to-day. Do you mind speaking very loudly and clearly, please, ma'am?"

Miss Warren turned in her chair and looked at her.

"What's the joke?" she inquired. "And why do you keep calling me 'ma'am'?"

"Oh, just to be respectful," explained Mary.

Miss Warren sniffed at this.

"Catch you being respectful," she said, "to anyone; and, anyhow, what do you want to be respectful to me for? Have you some new piece of mischief on? What is in that cupboard?" she broke off to inquire, as a sudden faint noise therein made itself audible.

"Nothing of the least consequence," said Mary giggling.

"I see nothing to laugh at," complained Miss Warren. "You wouldn't either, if you were waiting to meet a man who expects to marry you, and you had to explain to him you were engaged to someone else . . . I am sure the cat's in that cupboard."

"The cat's on the hearthrug under your nose, my dear girl," returned Mary composedly.

"Well, I am certain I heard something," said Miss Warren, looking doubtfully at the cupboard.

"Perhaps it was a mouse; shall I look and see?"

"Not on any account," cried Miss Warren. "Mary Honoria Hervey, come away from that cupboard this instant, and don't be horrid and unkind. I do think," she added,

sniffing audibly, "that when you know that awful, awful man may be here any moment—ugh, I keep wondering what he will say when he knows."

"Oh, I can tell you what he will say," said Mary very loudly. "The moment you enter the room he will bang his gloves on the table and he will shout out that he won't have anything to do with you on any account, and he will prance up and down the room like this," said Mary, doing a kind of exaggerated cake-walk. "And he will generally carry on till your heart jumps up and down and you feel like screaming and running away—only you daren't."

"Ugh," said Miss Warren with a shudder; "oh, he won't be quite such a beast as that."

"Yes, he will," asserted Mary. "I know," she added. "Because he has been here," she concluded.

"Been?" screamed Miss Warren. "Then where is he now?"

"Inside the lower of those two cupboards," explained Mary, pointing with her large and floury spoon.

"Mary," said Miss Warren solemnly, "whatever in the name of goodness gracious do you mean?"

"Just that," said Mary with infinite relish.

"Just what?" cried Miss Warren despairingly. "Mary, how *can* he be in there?"

"Well, it's rather a tight fit, I admit," said Mary, "but he squeezed himself in in the most wonderful way possible." She turned and surveyed the exterior of the cupboard with much interest. "He is quite a tall, big man, too," she remarked. "Would you pass me the sugar?—the sugar, please, not a carving-fork. Thank you. Really, I can't think myself how he managed it. He must be ever so much cleverer than one would imagine to look at him, though I don't see how he can be truly comfortable in there. Do you?"

"But—but——" said the dazed Miss Warren; "if he is in there, why does he not come out?"

"He can't—he is locked in," explained Mary, "and the key is in my pocket," she added gloatingly.

Miss Warren put her hands to her head and groaned softly to herself.

"Am I mad?" she inquired, "or are you mad? or is he mad?"

"None of us," answered Mary cheerfully; "it is all perfectly simple when once you come to understand it."

"But inside the cupboard?" gasped Miss Warren again. She sat down and looked at it fixedly for some moments, evidently endeavouring to accustom herself to the idea. "Inside?" she said in an awed tone, "inside there?"

"Yes," confirmed Mary, "and he has grazed his shins and barked his elbows, and he has bumped his head against the shelf, and he has got his eyes full of dirt and dust, and the things he is thinking," concluded Mary, shaking her head, "are just shocking—shocking," she repeated.

"But inside that cupboard?" repeated Miss Warren; "why, it's where we keep the black-lead and the pails and scrubbing-brushes—and—and things."

"Well," said Mary, "it is also where I keep Captain Henry Valentine—and a better place for him than he deserves, too."

"But what did he go in for?" asked Miss Warren.

"I told him I was your cook and that you didn't allow followers; so he got in for fear you should see him and discharge me, to die of cold and starvation in the streets. I think it was very nice and chivalrous of him, don't you?"

"I think," said Miss Warren faintly, "that I should like a glass of water." When she had drunk and was a little refreshed she asked: "Did he believe you when you said you were our cook?"

"Of course," said Mary indignantly; "so I am for this afternoon, aren't I, if I am making one of my famous cakes for you? Your other cook I sent upstairs, because she says 'she don't nohow hold with young ladies messing about her kitchen,' and the maid is out, you know. So Captain Valentine and I had it all to ourselves."

"Don't talk so fast," pleaded Miss Warren; "tell it me in little bits; I can bear it better that way. But how long are you going to keep him there? We shall want the black-lead out to-morrow morning, you know."

"Oh, he can come out now if you like," said Mary obligingly.

Producing the key from her pocket she unlocked the door, and drew back with an air of pleased anticipation. But no Captain Valentine appeared; the door, a little ajar, remained unmoved, and within the cupboard profound silence reigned.

"Mary, you wicked girl," cried Miss Warren with a certain relief, "he is not there at all."

"Oh, yes, he is," said Mary, hugging herself with diabolical glee, "but perhaps he is

feeling a little shy. Whistle to him, dear, and then he will come."

But, fortunately, this extreme measure proved unnecessary, for now a weird sound of rumbling and of displaced pails and overturned bottles issued from the cupboard, and next a dejected gentleman emerged, and, painfully straightening his aching back, stood upright once more. Meekly he waited while the two girls surveyed him—Miss Mary with unutterable joy and satisfaction, Miss Warren with an awe and wonder equally beyond expression.

Mary's diagnosis of the case had been wonderfully accurate. Captain Valentine had grazed his shins, and he had barked his elbows. His head had come in contact with the shelf, and in trying to assume a sitting position thereafter worse catastrophe had overtaken him. Dust and dirt were in his eyes, and he blinked miserably as Miss Warren said with great politeness:

"Captain Valentine, I believe? Won't you take a chair? I am Lucy Warren, by-the-bye. You have met my friend, Miss Hervey, I think? Her father is General Hervey of the Engineers, of whom you may have heard."

"I have," said the Captain sadly; "I have also had the pleasure of meeting Miss Hervey."

But now Mary began to sniff the air, and in a severe tone she demanded:

"Pray, have you been upsetting the paraffin oil?"

"I have reason to believe," said Captain Valentine sorrowfully, "that I have been sitting in it." After a pause he added still more sadly: "It has soaked clean through."

Conversation languished, for the Captain was plunged in a silence as solemn and sad as his own heart. Mary was now busy at the table again, and Miss Warren appeared to have been attacked by internal convulsions of a severe, nay, agonising, description.

"Well," said Mary suddenly, turning sharply on the Captain, "why don't you tell Miss Warren with all the emphasis you used in addressing me that you will have nothing to do with her on any terms?"

"Because," said Captain Valentine, "I no longer feel emphatic."

"And I am engaged already," said Miss Warren, whose voice had entirely left her control and ran up and down the whole scale, from deep groans to sudden squeaks and squeals, in utter defiance of all its owner could do; "only I couldn't tell Lady Tabitha, because it was a secret then, and, besides, what she said kept people off the scent, while I never dreamt you would be coming home so soon, Captain Valentine. And, after the way you have treated him, Mary," she added, "I really think you had better take him yourself."

Then her internal disorder overcame her, and she fled shrieking from the room, while Mary, casting a startled glance at the Captain, made haste to follow her. But he moved quickly, too, and she found herself cut off from the door by a man who had unexpectedly grown large and formidable.

"It's the least you can do," said Captain Valentine sternly.

"But I am neither tall nor handsome," Mary reminded him.

"I'll overlook it," said Captain Valentine generously, "especially as you are so exceedingly pr——"

"Oh! but," urged Mary, hurriedly interrupting him, "think how I've treated you."

"I'd rather not, if it's all the same to you," said the Captain politely.

"But you can't help," urged Mary; "no one could—the oil, for instance," she said, putting her handkerchief to her nose with ostentation.

"Ah, yes, the oil," agreed the Captain, "there is certainly a difficulty in not thinking of the oil. But I like it."

"That," said Mary, "is a fib, and I don't like people who tell fibs."

"You tell 'em yourself," countered Captain Valentine, "and much worse ones, too."

Mary decided to drop that point.

"But are you not afraid I might treat you the same way again?" she asked, making her eyes big to intensify the horror of the suggestion.

"I'll take jolly good care about that," replied the Captain, with considerable vigour.

"But then, you know," urged Mary, falling back on her last defence, "that a soldier married is a soldier spoilt."

"A soldier who isn't spoilt by being shut up in a cupboard for several hours——"

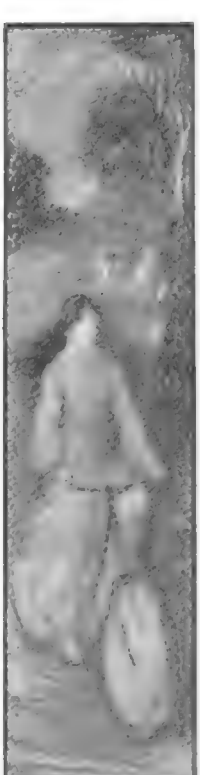
"Oh! not five minutes," interrupted Mary, shocked.

"——can never be spoilt at all. Besides, Aunt Tabby expects me to return engaged, and it would never do to disappoint her."

"Oh! of course—if it is to save Lady Tabitha Warren disappointment," murmured Mary—"only you seemed so certain you would never marry, especially me."

"Ah! but I've changed my mind since then," said the Captain, "especially as regards you."

A dejected gentleman emerged, and, painfully straightening his aching back, stood upright once more.



A girl, pale and beautiful . . . with long hair streaming in the wind

Real Life Romances.

Readers are Asked to Contribute to this Feature.
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The Ghost.

THE STRANGE ADVENTURE OF A SOCIETY GIRL.

THIS occurrence took place at Port Dodge, in the United States, not many months ago. An old woman had first whispered the rumour. Returning from a neighbour's house late one night, she had been horrified to see a strange white form speed noiselessly down the centre of the road. Thus the story originated.

In a short while everyone in Port Dodge was talking with bated breath of the apparition. Before a week had passed a man had seen the weird figure shortly after midnight. Terrified though he admitted himself to have been, he had yet retained sufficient presence of mind to declare, emphatically, that the figure was riding a bicycle.

Instead of casting a light on the mystery, this discovery deepened it the more. Who the lonely, white-clad figure could be, no one could surmise. That it was a practical joker was a theory soon dismissed. For the figure made no attempt to attract attention, carried no light, neither rang a bell to give warning of its approach.

At last, two young men, fired by a spirit of adventure, determined to unravel the mystery. Mounted on bicycles they kept a watch on an avenue down which the ghost was wont to ride. The first night passed without event. But on the second, a few minutes after midnight, they observed a white form fast advancing towards them.

A clear moon shone overhead, lighting up the avenue with silvery patches. Dismounting, the men crept into the shadow of the trees. A moment later the apparition flew past. They could hear the whirr of the bicycle. They stared aghast. Was this a visitant from an unknown world? It looked human—a girl, pale and beautiful in the steel-blue moonlight, with her long hair streaming in the wind.

Recovering their wits, the men sprang on their bicycles and were soon speeding along in hot pursuit. At the end of the avenue the weird cyclist turned towards the main street of the town, pedalling the while with untiring energy. Suddenly her machine lurched. She attempted to regain her balance and failed; then, uttering a loud scream, fell.

In an instant the two men had dismounted. One raised the inert form, whilst his friend, striking a match, glanced curiously at the strange cyclist. As the light lit up her face a cry of surprise burst from his lips. For in her he recognised the young daughter of a wealthy neighbour.

Leaving their machines, the two men carried the fainting girl to her home. There they learnt that from childhood she had been subject to walking in her sleep. Some weeks previously her father had given her a bicycle, and, no doubt, since then, instead of walking, she had, unknown to herself and parents, taken to cycling in her sleep.

This form of somnambulism was naturally fraught with considerable danger, as a serious accident might easily have occurred.

A Romance of the Telegraph.

THE STORY OF A DRIPPING TAP.

VICTOR BENNS was uneasy. The reason was scarcely apparent, even to himself, as he sat at tea with his particular friends in his rooms in Hampden Square. It certainly was not the effect of his companions, who, together with himself, were clerks in a telegraphic office in the city. They were jolly enough, but Victor Benns was uneasy: anyone could tell that.

"Why, Vic, what's the matter?" exclaimed one of his companions. Victor did not look up or answer for some time. Then he said: "Do you remember the telegram that came through about four o'clock?" "Why," replied one of his friends, "there were dozens." "Ah, but I mean one in particular, that consisted only of three words." "Can't say that I do; what where the words?" "They were, 'Look out! To-night,'" said Victor. "That was all, but, somehow, I can't forget them. However, here goes," and he started to attack his tea with apparent indifference. The snow came down in the street outside, and the wind howled and whistled, but the fire inside seemed all the brighter and warmer by contrast. "I wonder how deep the snow is," said someone. Victor suggested that by reaching out of the bathroom window on to the roof, they could easily see. He ran upstairs, followed by his companions.

Having lit the gas, his attention was arrested by the slowly dripping tap. He listened intently, then, with a startled face, he turned to his companions. "Heavens," he cried, "do you hear that?" "Hear what?" said a friend. "Why, the tap. Listen to those drips." The others did so. "Why, how funny—your telegram again," one said. The others verified the statement. To those accustomed to the ticking of a telegraphic message on the receiver, that dripping tap was distinctly saying, "Look out! To-night."

The friends had scarcely time to give thought to this extraordinary occurrence before there was a sound of wheels coming round the corner into Hampden Square. They were yet more startled when there was a sharp cry in the street below, and the sound of wheels died slowly away.

Victor dashed downstairs. A loud, double knock at the door was heard. A tall man in a snow-covered overcoat stood in the doorway. "Doctor here?" he demanded. "No, next door; what's the matter? We heard a cry, and ——" "Woman knocked down by a passing cab: afraid she's dead."

* * * * * * *

In the newspapers next day appeared this announcement:—

"Last night, at about 10.30, a well-dressed woman was knocked down by a cab in Hampden Square, and seriously injured. A doctor was called, and she was removed to an infirmary, where she died early this morning. Nothing in her possession gives any clue to her identity, except a telegram, on which is the extraordinary message, 'Look out! To-night,' with no signature. The envelope, which would have borne the address, is missing. It is rather singular that the cab did not notice the accident it had occasioned. The police are making inquiries."

"Heavens," he cried, "do you hear that?"

He was suddenly precipitated into the water.

Gallantry Rewarded.

THE HISTORY OF A STRANGE COINCIDENCE.

ON a breezy afternoon towards the end of August, two model yachts were lying with their bowsprits exactly in line on the slightly ruffled waters of an artificial lake, situated in a Public Recreation Ground. The sterns of the little vessels were each held by the hand of their respective owners, who sprawled at full length upon the bank, and awaited the signal for starting their respective craft.

"One, two, three—Off," slowly pronounced a young man who had consented to take upon himself the onerous duties of starter. Simultaneously, a shove was given by either hand to the small, white-winged boats. These lurched unsteadily forward, with decks awash, on their wind-directed voyage to the opposite bank. One of the little yachts began almost immediately to gain on its companion. This vessel rejoiced in the name of the *Saucy Sally*, and seemed bent on leaving behind the *Lady Madcap*, which had not yet caught the full force of the breeze.

Now followed an exciting period for the anxious owners of the racing craft. The lake was fairly wide, and afforded ample scope for a spirited contest. *Lady Madcap's* skipper was in a fever of impatience. He knew that she could sail two lengths to the *Saucy Sally's* one if only she would catch the wind, but, owing to the bad start he had given her, she was heavily handicapped. On the other hand, the *Saucy Sally* was rapidly showing a clean pair of heels to her rival, and seemed certain of proving the victor.

Suddenly the *Lady Madcap's* sails were filled out by the wind, and she commenced rapidly to lessen the distance between herself and the *Saucy Sally*. In a short time the boats were running dead level. Then an awful thing happened. Within a few lengths of the finish, the *Lady Madcap* caught fast in a patch of weeds, leaving the *Saucy Sally* to win easily.

The stranded vessel's owner, accompanied by his friend, rushed round to the other side of the lake, the friend crying exultantly "*Saucy Sally* wins." The young man who had officiated as starter followed them, an unnoticed listener. Before he had gone far, however, he saw reason to quicken his steps, and he arrived at the opposite bank to find a small but excited crowd of spectators gathering around two dripping figures—a man in hysterics and a boy just recovering from the shock of an impromptu cold bath.

This is what had happened. The owner of the losing yacht finding, as he feared, that his boat had been checked by the patch of water-weed, had reached forward with a long stick to try to set her free. In his haste and excitement he had failed to make sure of his foothold, and, a portion of the bank giving way, he was suddenly precipitated into the water.

A bystander, who had only lately joined a group of persons engaged in watching the progress of the yachts, threw off his coat, jumped into the lake, and, rescuing the lad, found him, when he got to land, none other than *his own son!*

His mingled feelings upon this discovery had, not unnaturally, overcome him for the moment.

The Man with a Conscience.

AND HOW IT WAS APPRECIATED.

THIS little story, which, no doubt, will revive recollections —perhaps conscience, there's no telling—in every paternal mind, is told by a German, and the incident happened in his own country.

Said he:

"A few weeks ago I happened to be travelling from Augsburg to Munich. Besides myself, there were an elderly gentleman and his small son in the compartment. The old gentleman and I occupied opposite seats, so I had ample opportunity to observe him. His was a face that you instinctively felt could do no wrong. At least, such was my impression of him.

"However, despite the outward serenity of his countenance, the old gentleman appeared very ill at ease. Every few minutes he took out his watch and glanced critically at the time. Then his eyes would fall on the small boy at his side, and he would murmur inaudibly to himself. His actions naturally awakened my curiosity. I began to fear that he was demented. Such anxiety as to the hour appeared quite unwarrantable to me, and it was with no little apprehension that I saw him rise suddenly, lower the window, and pull violently at the communication cord.

"Had there been time I would have inquired the reason. But the train pulled up with such abruptness that it was as much as I could manage to retain my seat.

"A great opening and slamming of doors followed. I could hear startled voices anxiously asking the officials what had occurred.

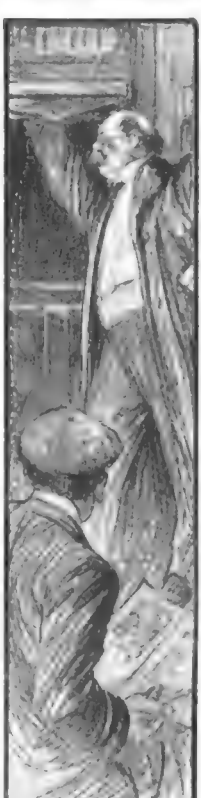
"My elderly companion had now completely regained his composure. His previous agitation had given place to a look of supreme complacency, and he turned a smiling face on the white-faced guard, who, no doubt, imagining some dreadful tragedy had been enacted, inquired anxiously if we had pulled the communication cord.

"'Yes, it was I,' at once replied the old gentleman, beaming and fumbling in his waistcoat pocket, from which he presently withdrew a full ticket and a half one. 'It is now half-past nine.' The official glanced curiously at me. 'Ten years ago,' proceeded my elderly companion, 'my little son was born—precisely at that hour. Consequently he is now three minutes over ten years of age. When I left Augsburg he was, of course, under ten, so, as was my right, I took a half-fare ticket for him. But now he is over ten, he must have a full ticket. That is why I pulled the cord. I wish to take a full ticket for my son for the remainder of the journey.'"

* * * * * *

The stars indicate a great deal more than has already been written. Such qualms of conscience were beyond the comprehension of the officials. Even the railway company failed to appreciate such extreme honesty, and compelled the old gentleman not only to pay for the ticket, but an additional hundred marks (five pounds) for stopping the train without a reasonable cause.

Certainly honesty of this kind is distinctly morbid, and must be treated as a disease.



I . . . and pull violently at the communication cord.

Then the girl . . . placed her fingers to her lips.

An Unexpected Visitor.

A STRANGE SWISS INCIDENT.

IN the Swiss town of St. Gall, distant about twenty miles from Lake Constance, a wealthy widow lay at the point of death. A shaded light cast a soft glamour in the sick-room. On a chair beside the bed, his hand on the dying woman's pulse, sat a doctor, whilst her daughter looked on with tear-filled eyes.

Slowly the hours crept by. The servants retired. The house was wrapped in darkness.

* * * * * *

A man crept from a shrubbery in the garden. For an instant he paused to listen, then he stole swiftly towards the house.

At the kitchen window he halted. Then, drawing a chisel from his pocket, he shot back the catch and vanished inside the house, closing the window behind him. Moving as noiselessly as possible, he passed carefully from the kitchen into the hall, from which a staircase ascended to the upper floors.

A massive door opened out of this hall on the burglar's right, and this he understood to be the dining-room door.

He turned the handle gently, and with the utmost care pushed the door open.

Supposing the hinges should creak and thus betray his presence in the house? They did nothing of the kind, however, and the burglar advanced into the room, which was untenanted and in darkness.

A rich store of silver-ware shone brightly in the rays of his lantern, and he noiselessly transferred it to a bag.

Having ransacked all the lower rooms, the burglar, emboldened by success, crept softly upstairs.

The yellow light of his lantern gleamed on the polished knob of a door. He softly turned the handle and entered the room. At last, however, Fortune had deserted the daring housebreaker. A flood of light almost blinded him for a moment; then he became a prey to the greatest astonishment

With difficulty he restrained the cry which rose to his lips.

The room was occupied. A pale-faced girl rose up as he paused, dumfounded, at the door. She pointed to a pallid form lying on the bed. A man was seated near by. He, too, glanced wearily at the burglar.

Then the girl, still indicating the motionless form, placed her fingers to her lips. Her companion did the same. For a moment the burglar wondered at these signs. Obviously, these people did not realise the meaning of his presence.

He glanced at the bed. His face whitened in horror. He realised the scene. A thousand horrible thoughts assailed him. He nodded a significant response—then departed as silently as he had entered.

* * * * * *

Next morning the servants told of a strange discovery. The butler, on entering the pantry, had found that the place had been robbed. All the silver-ware had disappeared.

He had just determined to call the police, when another servant brought word that she had discovered everything in a bag on the front door-step.

No doubt the burglar, moved by what he had seen, had relented and, returning, restored the whole of the booty that he had taken.

WHEN GREAT MEN WOO.

The Love Stories of Famous People.

By JOHN GLENFIELD

King Edward and Queen Alexandra in the garden of Rosenberg Castle.

THE love-making of King Edward was romantic in the extreme. He had reached the age at which it is considered necessary that the heir to an important kingdom should find a bride, but none of the Royal ladies who had been selected for him quite met his tastes. Statesmen were becoming anxious, for they feared that the future king would remain a bachelor, and that the succession might be endangered.

One day, however, while he was travelling on the Continent, he entered a famous cathedral to have the beauties of its architecture pointed out to him. While the gentleman who was in attendance directed his attention to this arch and to that colonnade, the young Prince suddenly spied among the worshippers a beautiful girl whose lovely face and graceful figure forbade him to think of mere creations in stone and lime.

"Who is that young lady?" he asked his attendant

"That," was the reply, "is a daughter of the King of Denmark."

As the late Queen pointed out in her memoirs, it was a most fortunate coincidence that the Princess was of Royal blood, for if there had been any obstacles in the way of his marrying her, it is certain that he would never have wedded at all.

But as it was, he visited the Danish King, secured his consent and an introduction to the Princess, and, what was more important, learnt from the lips of the young lady herself that she was willing to be his wife.

A very pretty incident is related of their courtship days. One day the lover found his affianced wife in the garden of Rosenberg Castle, busily reading a book. He inquired what author was being honoured so much, and the Princess told him with a laugh that it was Shakespeare, her favourite writer, and that this particular work was "Hamlet."

The Prince borrowed the volume in order that he might read her certain passages which he specially esteemed. What was his surprise at discovering that these very extracts had already been marked in pencil! Without a moment's delay he ran into the palace, and, returning with his own Shakespeare, showed her that his own marginal notes coincided in every detail with hers.

Had such a thing not been obvious, here was evidence of the similarity of their sentiments

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The first meeting of the Kaiser and Kaiserin, in the grounds of Balmoral Castle.

and of the fact that they were eminently suited to make one another happy.

Even in his youth, the originality and independence of the German Emperor were apparent to everyone who came in contact with him. Queen Victoria, who was a born reader of character, understood his temperament exactly, and she knew that if she were to be successful in the match she had planned for him she must use the utmost caution.

She invited him to Balmoral Castle, and on the very day of his arrival there informed him that she wished to introduce him to a young lady who also was her guest.

"She is somewhere in the grounds," said the Queen. "Let us go and find her."

And so together they left the drawing-room and crossed the lawn. Presently they came to a hedge, through which they could catch glimpses of a dainty white frock and a fresh pink face.

The picture appealed to the romantic element in the young man, and he thrust aside the branches and stepped through the hedge. In front of him was a girl in a hammock. So much had she been startled by his sudden approach that she dropped the book of poems with which she had been amusing herself, and looked up at him in surprise, a pretty blush mantling her cheeks.

"I have found my princess!" cried the Prince. And from that moment his heart was hers.

Of the wooing of his father, Queen Victoria gives a most interesting account in her journal.

"Our dear Victoria," she says, "was this day engaged to Prince Frederick William of Prussia. He had already spoken to us of his wishes, but we were uncertain, on account of his extreme youth, whether he should speak to her himself, or wait till he came back again.

"However, it was felt better he should do so, and during our ride up Craig-na-Ban this afternoon, he picked a piece of white heather, the emblem of good luck, which he gave to her; and this enabled him to make allusion to his hopes and wishes, as they rode down Glen Girnock, which led to this happy conclusion."

The wooing of the Duke of Fife furnishes us with a notable instance of the case of the man who has known the girl of his affections from the time when she wore short frocks.

He had always been upon terms of the closest intimacy with the Prince of Wales (as King Edward was then), and he had known the Princess Royal when she was a little girl. When she grew up, and young Fife discovered that he could not be happy without her, he obtained her parents' consent to the match; but he could not find courage to propose to the lady herself. The very fact that he had known her as a child made him afraid that she would laugh at the suggestion.

During the shooting season the Princess and her daughters came on a visit to Mar Lodge, the Duke's Highland seat, and one morning, while most people were still fast asleep, he went out with his gun to make a bag before the dew had left the heather. On the moors whom should he meet but Princess Louise!

What he said to her will never be made public, but when they returned to breakfast they were an engaged couple.

The love-story of the Tsar shows how remarkably tenacious his family is of ancient traditions. At Walton-on-Thames he had met the lady whom he wished to make his wife, and he had obtained his father's consent to the match, but it still remained for him to make his proposal to the girl herself. One beautiful summer evening he found her in a little rustic summer-house, and it seemed to him that the time was in every way fitting for what he had to say. But the sacred words had to be uttered in the old formula which Russian Court etiquette prescribed for such occasions, and, knowing how unsuitable they were under modern conditions, he felt awkward and uneasy.

The engagement of the Princess Royal and the Duke of Fife resulted from a chance encounter in the early morning.

Seating himself beside the girl, he took her hand in his.

"The Emperor, my father," he said, "has commanded me to make you the offer of my hand and heart."

"My grandmother, the Queen," she replied, her eyes twinkling with mischief, "has commanded me to accept the offer of your hand."

Then she broke into a merry laugh.

"Your heart," she added, "I take of my own accord."

The survival of an old superstition once made a duchess.

Lady Rosslyn was giving a dinner-party, and at the last moment she found that one of the invited guests had failed to appear, and that in consequence the fatal number of thirteen would sit down at table together. Remembering the old saying that if thirteen ate at one board they would never meet again, she cast about for some way of making up a more propitious number.

Her daughter Millicent was home from school, but as she was only sixteen she had not been included in the dinner-party, for she was considered too young to come out. In her dilemma, however, Lady Rosslyn summoned her daughter, and told her that her presence was necessary to avert ill luck.

The gentleman who was deputed to take her in to dinner was the Marquis of Stafford, and so completely did she charm him by her wit and vivacity that before the meal was finished he had asked her to be his wife.

Fourteen must have been a lucky number, for the Duchess of Sutherland, as she has become since her husband's accession to the title, has been one of the most successful women in Society.

The Tsar offering his hand and heart to Princess Alix of Hesse-Darmstadt.

before their master. Fortunately this gentleman had seen photographs of Lord Aberdeen, though he had not hitherto met him personally; and he saw at once that the tale the poacher told was a true one.

The serious aspect of the affair had now vanished, and both peers laughed heartily over what had happened.

Lord Aberdeen was persuaded to stay to lunch, and so it happened that he met Isabel, the daughter of the house, who charmed him from the first with her beauty and accomplishments.

Now she is Lady Aberdeen, and often they laugh together about the time when the Earl was brought to the house of his father-in-law as a common poacher.

Love at first sight has not always ended so happily. John Ruskin fell in love with the oval face and graceful figure of Adèle Domecq the very moment he met her. She was the daughter of his father's business partner, and had come to visit the Ruskins at Herne Hill.

Young Ruskin was naturally shy in the society of ladies, but the surpassing fairness of Miss Domecq aroused a new emotion within him, and he determined not to waste a moment in prosecuting his suit. On the evening of the day of her arrival he found her in the garden, and then and there he poured out the fulness of his heart.

It was unfortunate that the young lady did not know a word of English, nor he a syllable of her native Spanish. She had to gather his meaning from his gestures, and these, perhaps, were not so graceful as they might have been. Anyhow, she burst into a peal of laughter.

"If this boy does not stop," she cried in Spanish, "I shall kill myself with laughing!"

It has always been said that Cupid could not endure ridicule, but Ruskin loved this

Another case of love at first sight is that of the Earl of Aberdeen, who, until 1898, was Governor-General of Canada. When he was thirty he was still unmarried, and his friends laughingly said he would remain heart-whole all his days.

But Fate willed it otherwise. He was shooting over a friend's estate, the boundaries of which he was not accurately acquainted with. All unwittingly he crossed the border and shot some partridges belonging to Lord Tweedmouth. Scarcely had he done so when a party of his lordship's keepers took him in custody as a poacher.

Lord Aberdeen told them who he was, but, unfortunately, he had no card to corroborate his statement, and the cautious keepers refused to believe him, for they had been cheated in a similar way before. They insisted upon his accompanying them to Lord Tweedmouth's house, and they led him

beautiful Spaniard till she married the Baron Duquesne. "Then," he writes, "my heart was dead within me."

There is no more beautiful Royal love-story than that of Queen Victoria and Prince Albert. The fact that in this case the lady was a reigning sovereign at the time of the courtship made matters very difficult for both parties. If her lover had in any way taken the initiative in signifying his feelings he would have been committing a breach of good form; if he had actually proposed it would have been a flagrant mistake in point of etiquette.

It was not difficult for either to see that the other was in love, but the question was how to make an absolute declaration of the affection. The young Prince dare not take the first step, and the Queen's innate modesty made her shrink from doing so.

At length an idea occurred to her which offered a means of solving the problem. A State Ball was in progress at Windsor Castle, and Prince Albert was one of the invited guests. After dancing with him, the young Queen handed him a sprig of white lilac which she plucked from her breast. This compliment he acknowledged in the most delicate way possible. There being no flower buttonhole in the uniform he was wearing, he drew a penknife from his pocket and slit a hole in the breast of his tunic, thrusting the stalk through it.

After that the courtship proceeded upon the usual lines, most of the meetings and walks being in a charming spot in the Home Park not very far from the Castle walls. But at length the time arrived for the happy pair to become engaged, and once more the old trouble presented itself. The actual proposal must not be made by Prince Albert; that was the embarrassing duty of the Queen.

She did it at another ball at Windsor, but in what words we shall never know. In the midst of the dancing she came to the Duchess of Gloucester and whispered in her ear.

"I have just done the most nervous thing that ever a woman was called on to do," she said blushing. "I have proposed to Prince Albert."

In the love affairs of our Royal House, love is all-important, and political expediency takes a second place. But this is not the case with many of the reigning families abroad.

The Emperor of Austria is a born intriguer, and time after time he has endeavoured to strengthen his power by means of the marriage tie. That Cupid has played so many strange pranks in the Austrian Court is largely due to this match-making propensity of the Emperor.

His son, the Crown Prince Rudolph, was wedded to Stephanie, the daughter of King Leopold of Belgium; but the match was purely one of convenience, and not of love. From the first the company of the frigid Princess was distasteful to her husband, and she was his wife in name only. It was common talk that they were unhappy.

Then like a thunder-bolt came the news that the Crown Prince and the lady on whom he had fixed his affections had been found dead in a shooting-box at Meyerling. Details of the tragedy have been carefully concealed, and it will never be known whether the man killed the woman and then committed suicide, or whether the opposite is the truth.

Such is the penalty where the little god is not allowed free play.

A truly romantic instance of Cupid's immediate conquest is the case of the late Mr. Gladstone. It was at the Colosseum in Rome that he first set eyes upon Miss Glynne. A carnival was in progress at the time, and the flare of a thousand torchlights gave an added glamour to the delicate beauty of the young lady. But it was as much through the cleverness of her remarks as the refinement of her features that the statesman became her slave.

"If ever I marry," he said to a companion, "that is the girl who will be my wife."

Royal blood demands a speedy decision as to the selection of a life's partner, for where the stability of succession is jeopardised the demands of statecraft make early marriage imperative.

Of the present sovereigns of Europe none have married after thirty, nor any of their queens after twenty-two. The King of Sweden was the oldest Royal bridegroom, being twenty-eight when he married; the King of Belgium, on the other hand, wedded at eighteen. The Tsaritsa and the German Empress both married at twenty-two, and at the other end of the scale we have the Queen of Greece at sixteen.

In how many of these cases did political considerations weigh side by side with sentiment? Who shall answer?

But it may safely be said that where happiness has crowned the union, love was paramount in its formation.

"Love rules the Court, the Camp, the Grove:"

MUVVER'S BIRFDAY CAKE

The Story of A Broken Secret.

By

Josephine Gates.

"Here are the candles, Daddy," cried Helen, as she rushed into the pantry, her face beaming with joy.

Daddy welcomed her with delight, and both surveyed the mammoth cake with the greatest satisfaction; and no wonder, for whoever saw such a cake? And what a time Annie had had to keep it a secret!

Daddy had asked her if she could possibly make a birthday cake and keep it from her mistress. He told her of the many efforts he had made in that direction year after year, until it had finally grown to be a joke in the family. He was really annoyed over the fact that she always found it out in some way.

"Now, Annie," he said earnestly, "if you think you can do it, all right. If not, I'll buy one, for I am determined to succeed this time!"

Annie tossed her head scornfully and cried:

"Buy a cake! Why, it wouldn't be fit to eat if you did! Leave it to me, sir, and the mistress won't even sniff it!"

And here it was in all its white purity, and the mistress hadn't had even one whiff of its spicy odour!

And it was a work of art, indeed! Her name, "Violet," was written in lavender sweets on the snowy surface and the intervening spaces were filled with artistic and intricate patterns of scroll work. In the centre was to be a nodding bunch of the beautiful flowers after which she was named, filling the air with their sweet perfume.

And now came the crowning delight of placing the candles; and as this final performance was achieved, Helen gleefully danced about, but was admonished by Daddy, who said softly:

"Be quiet, dear, you might disturb Mother's nap, and Harvey may hear, and he would tell and spoil it all."

As they stood off to admire the result, they were suddenly startled by a clear, sweet, baby voice exclaiming in tones of suppressed delight:

"Makin' a birfday cake for Muvver, Daddy?"

Both turned with a gesture of despair to behold little Harvey's sweet, shining face peering up at them.

"Isn't it pretty!" he cried. "Won't she be glad! Hold me up, Daddy, so I can see it gooder."

Daddy held him up, and let him admire it to his heart's content.

"Now, dear, Papa and Helen wanted to s'prise her with this cake on her birfday; so when she was out calling, Annie made it and frosted it, and put all these pretty sweets on it, and Helen went to the grocer's and bought the candles, and Muvver doesn't even know it yet, and here it is ready, and we must be sure not to tell her."

"Course not, Daddy: Helen, don't you

tell Muvver 'bout the cake, 'cos it's a secret!" he said severely to Helen.

"No, darling, I won't tell."

"That's a good girl," he said patronisingly. "Daddy, you won't tell, will you?"

"No, Daddy wouldn't tell for the world!"

"Let me down, Daddy, and I'll run and tell Annie not to tell, and then that's all," and he tried to wriggle out of Daddy's arms.

Daddy held him fast and said earnestly:

"No, I told Annie and she promised, and now Harvey, you won't tell, will you?"

"Oh, no, course I won't tell," he said emphatically. "I wouldn't tell her for nothin'. Why, Daddy, it would just spoil it all if I told."

As Daddy hurried down the steps the door opened softly and this sweet message floated after him:

"Daddy, hadn't you better buy Muvver a box of sweets?"

He nodded and shook a warning finger at the boy as he passed down the street, satisfied that he had made the child understand the importance of keeping the secret. He was such a trusty little fellow, he said to himself thoughtfully, no danger of his telling.

At six p.m. he hastened joyfully up the steps, opened the door and heard the usual heavenly greeting:

"Daddy's come, Muvver!"

And then his beloved boy was in his arms, with his little, soft face pressed close to his own, and his yellow curls brushing his cheek.

"Where is Muvver, dear?" Daddy whispered.

"She's putting on her pretty blue dress we like so much, and you just ought to see her," he prattled in silvery tones. "She's goin' to wear the new handkerchief you gave her, and she has a new bow in her hair. She looks awful sweet!"

"Of course she does, and you didn't tell her our nice little secret, did you, dear?" he asked anxiously.

The boy looked proudly into his face, his beautiful eyes so clear and bright illuminating his whole countenance, as he realised the supreme joy that was about to thrill his father's heart, and cried in triumphant tones:

"I only told her *once*, Daddy. Did you bring the sweets?"

Daddy held him up, and let him admire it to his heart's content

By Allen Upward.

This is the Second Instalment of a New Series of Exciting Ghost Stories. They are entirely Different in Conception from Anything of the Kind that has ever been Published before. Each Story is Complete in Itself.

II.—THE TAPPING ON THE WAINSCOT.

The mysterious incident which I am going to narrate is one which seems to have a particular interest for those who study occult phenomena.

According to some who have discussed it with me, it throws an important light on the conditions which prevail in the world of spirits, and the limitations to their action.

However, I do not care to say anything on the subject myself. My object is simply to set down facts, and leave others to draw their own conclusions.

It was about a year after the affair of the Green House, Wallington, already related, when our firm received instructions from the solicitors of Sir Henry Weetman to dispose by auction of his family mansion, Hailesbury Manor, Sussex.

I was told that Sir Henry was a distant relation, who had recently come into the title and estate on the death of the last baronet, and preferred to live abroad. The furniture and effects had been sold already by a firm of auctioneers, well known for their sales of that kind, and the house and estate were to follow.

I went down with a clerk to view the place, and found it to be a very handsome old Jacobean mansion, with valuable oak wainscot in all the principal rooms.

The caretaker who showed us over it was a dear old lady who had been housekeeper to the last baronet, and was evidently heart-broken at the prospect of the old family seat passing into the possession of strangers.

"Sir Christopher—that's my late master—would turn in his grave if he knew what was being done with the old place," she lamented. "And I shouldn't wonder if he did know."

I was busy directing the clerk in taking measurements of the more important rooms and did not pay much heed to this obscure intimation.

In due course we reached the first floor, and the housekeeper conducted us into a great, square room with a huge fireplace, and two windows commanding a view over the park.

I was surprised to find that this room had not been stripped so completely as the ones downstairs. It still contained a magnificently carved oak bedstead, a four-poster, equal in size to the bedroom of a modern flat.

"This is the room Sir Christopher died in," the old lady said impressively. "He died in that bed. King Charles I. once slept in it."

"And why hasn't it been removed like the rest of the furniture?" I naturally asked.

"It is fixed to the floor, for one thing," was the answer. "And Sir Henry thought it would fetch more by leaving it where it is. But I believe he would have it taken away now if he knew what I know."

Mrs. Musgrave, as the old housekeeper was named, nodded her head and pursed up her

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lips, after the manner of old ladies when they have a secret which they are longing to tell, but which they think it due to their dignity only to part with under pressure.

"Why, what is it you know?" I asked, with an interest by no means feigned.

"Perhaps I ought not to speak of it," the housekeeper returned, with a glance at my clerk.

I sent the young man into the other room, and repeated my question.

"Well, sir, it may be that I ought not to be the first to mention it, but it's being talked of in the village, and if you didn't hear of it from me you'd hear of it from somebody else, most likely." Mrs. Musgrave lowered her voice: "This house is haunted, sir."

Remembering my late grisly experience, I did not reply as lightly as I might have done once to such a statement.

"Haunted? How? In what way?"

"You may believe me, or you may not, sir," Mrs. Musgrave said with deliberation, evidently in no hurry to come to the point. "There are some who can hear it, and some who can't. Some say it's only fancy, and others that it's the spirit of Sir Christopher. But all I can say is, I wouldn't pass a night in this room again, not if you were to offer me fifty pounds."

This was not very pleasant hearing. If a report of this kind were current in the village it would be pretty sure to reach the ears of any intending purchaser, and perhaps choke him off.

An old family ghost, or the tradition of one, is sometimes considered an attraction to a venerable country seat. But any really unpleasant phenomena, particularly if of quite recent date, would be a very decided drawback in most people's eyes.

"Can you tell me exactly what you did hear?" I asked.

"It is a tapping, sir, a tapping on the wainscot just over there," she pointed to the wall opposite the foot of the bed. "I was lying asleep in the bed, sir,—for when the house was stripped, and Sir Henry went away, I thought there would be no harm in my sleeping here, and I wanted to say I had slept in the same bed as King Charles. But it's my belief that Sir Henry must have heard the tapping himself, and seen something as well, that frightened him; and that's why he was so anxious to clear everything out of the house, and leave it."

I listened, hardly knowing what question to put next. At last I inquired:

"Do you suggest—is there any reason to suppose—that there was anything wrong about Sir Christopher Weetman's death?"

The question took Mrs. Musgrave by surprise.

"Wrong, sir? What should there be wrong? I'm sure the poor gentleman couldn't have died more peacefully. Miss Alice and I were with him the whole time."

"Who was Miss Alice?"

"His daughter—at least, his adopted daughter. She had lived with him since she was a baby, and he made no difference between her and his own flesh and blood." Mrs. Musgrave's voice changed again, as she added: "And in my belief it's on her account that Sir Christopher walks."

"Why?"

"Because when Sir Henry came down he turned her out of the house with nothing but the clothes she stood in. Sir Christopher hadn't made a will, and he came into everything as the heir. Miss Alice had to go to London and take a situation as a waitress."

I mused in silence. Could there be anything in that strange suggestion? Was it not more likely that the old housekeeper's indignation at her new master's conduct had made her fancy that the ordinary noises of an old mansion by night were a protest on the part of the dead?

"And have you heard the tapping since?" I asked.

"*I hear it every night!*" was the startling answer. "I have shifted my bed to half the rooms in the house, but it makes no difference. Wherever I am, the taps come; and then they move along the wall and by the staircases and the corridors till they reach this room and stop there!"

"Have you followed them?" I exclaimed, astonished.

"I did the first time—now I daren't," the housekeeper answered. "But I got Jim Bateman from the lodge to come up one night, and he heard them, and followed them, and they led him to the same place. And now he would no more cross the threshold of the house after dark than he would fly."

It was clear to me by this time that, whether fact or fancy, the story called for investigation.

I am not naturally nervous, and in spite of the disagreeable memories of the last haunted house I had spent a night in, I determined to face whatever there was to face in Hailesbury Manor.

Accordingly, I arranged with Mrs. Musgrave to make up a bed for me the next

night but one. Not in the haunted room itself, that I did not feel disposed to risk, but so as to enable me to be at hand when the mysterious tapping began.

I was careful to say nothing in the office meanwhile, and, above all, to keep the matter from the ears of my lady secretary. Miss Sargent had solved the mystery of the Green House for me, but she had done so at the cost of an experience to which I could not think of exposing her a second time.

On the appointed evening I returned to Hailesbury with a small dressing-bag, prepared to stay the night.

The housekeeper had prepared a bedroom for me on one of the upper floors, not far from her own. But as she told me that the ghostly tapping usually began about midnight, I decided to sit up for it, and persuaded her to do the same.

We had supper together in a room downstairs, the old lady getting it ready herself. Not a girl in the village, it appeared, could be induced to remain in the house after sunset.

After supper Mrs. Musgrave nodded off to sleep in a rocking-chair before the fire, while I lit a cigar and waited in some excitement for what was to come.

The room in which we sat was wainscotted, like all those on the ground floor. Every time a coal dropped from the fire, or a window-frame rattled, I fancied the mysterious summons had come, and started nervously in my chair.

I believe it is not merely fancy which causes us to hear so many more small noises in a house at night than in the day time, but that there is some scientific reason for it. Be that as it may, everyone must admit that the sense of hearing is more acute in the darkness than in the light.

As twelve o'clock approached I deliberately turned the lamp out, keeping a candle and some matches by my side.

Hardly had I done this when I received a shock which nearly made me jump out of my chair. It was a tap—loud, sharp, and imperative—on the door of the room.

In my agitation the habitual phrase, "Come in," rose to my lips, and I uttered it. At the same moment my companion woke with a start, and stared about her wildly in the dim firelight.

"Did you hear It?" she asked in an awe-struck whisper.

"Yes. Did you?"

As she nodded in answer, the tap sounded a second time, seeming fainter and further off.

I rose to my feet, and lit the candle.

"Are you going to follow It?" the old woman breathed.

"Yes; will you come?"

She shook her head.

"I dare not. Give me the matches! Don't go till I have lit the lamp, for my sake!"

I lingered, my own nerves becoming affected in sympathy with hers, while the frightened woman clutched the box from my hand, and struck a match, which she applied to the wick of the lamp.

At the same moment I heard the Tap for the third time, low, and fading away in the distance.

I strode to the door of the room, opened it, and passed out into the passage, leaving the door ajar.

The ghostly Tap sounded again far away in front of me, at the foot of the great staircase.

I strode after It, with quickening steps and throbbing pulses, carefully screening the candle flame with one hand. It moved on up the stairs, seeming to fly before me, and I almost raced to catch up that beckoning sound.

Along the main corridor overhead I was drawn, straight to the door of the death-chamber.

As I crossed the threshold, and the huge four-poster loomed up in the shadow, the character of the ghostly sound underwent a change.

Instead of a single tap, travelling with the speed of a terrified man fleeing from pursuit, it became a hurried knocking, moving round the room behind the wainscot as if in search of something. I could have sworn that Someone or Something was *feeling its way along*.

The daunting sounds arrived at the middle of the wall opposite the foot of the great bed, and became stationary.

Once—twice—thrice—that awful Tap broke the silence, louder and more menacing each time.

And then all at once the flame of the candle turned blue and went out, leaving me in the stillness and the darkness, with the feeling that I was *not alone*.

How I got downstairs again I can hardly remember, but I am not ashamed to say that never was sight more welcome than the lamp-light streaming through the open door on to the passage as I rushed towards it.

Mrs. Musgrave gave me a glance, and screamed:

"You have seen It?"

"No, no," I said, "but the light went out, and I had no matches."

I related my experience in a few words, and then made a confession.

"I cannot sleep in this house to-night, Mrs. Musgrave. I must go down to the village and try to get into the inn."

To my relief she offered no opposition. I fancy I was not the first person who had left her at the same hour for the same reason.

Not even in the morning did I feel inclined to return to the haunted house. I went up to London by the first train, and, going straight to the office, asked Miss Sargent to come into my room, and told her everything.

She listened with intense interest, not interrupting by so much as a movement till I had come to the end.

Then she said with grave decision:

"You must let me go down and spend a night in that room, Mr. Hargreaves."

"Don't think of such a thing!" I exclaimed. "I should never permit you to run the risk of such a shock as I had last night."

"It is a matter of necessity," Miss Sargent replied firmly. "It is a matter of duty. I cannot doubt that the tapping on the wainscot has a meaning. It is a message from the dead."

"A message! I don't understand."

"I don't profess to understand it myself at present. But I do not believe that it is an ordinary case of what is called haunting, where a spirit appears to be bound in some way to a particular spot. Neither do I believe that the object of this manifestation has been to drive the new owner of the house away, or to render it uninhabitable."

"Then what do you suggest?"

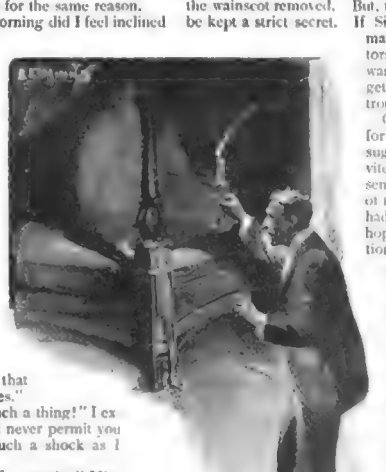
"I feel sure there is a reason for the taps always coming back to one particular place on the wall of that one room."

A light seemed to break on her mind as she spoke, and she added quickly:

"I should not wonder if there were something hidden behind the wainscot, perhaps a will or a paper of some kind."

I recalled what the housekeeper had told me about the adopted child of the dead man, turned adrift so heartlessly by the heir to his wealth.

"Pray Heaven you are right!" I ejaculated fervently. "I will go down again and have the wainscot removed. But, mind, this must be kept a strict secret. If Sir Henry Wretman or his solicitors heard what I was doing, I might get into serious trouble."



As I crossed the threshold, and the huge four-poster loomed up in the shadow, the . . . ghostly sound underwent a change.

Out of gratitude for Miss Sargent's suggestion, I invited her to be present at the opening of the wainscot. I had confided my hopes and intentions to Mrs. Musgrave, who was intensely excited at the prospect of justice being done to her beloved young mistress.

"To think that I should never have guessed what it meant!" she cried. "And I thought I understood it better than anyone else, too."

"Did you think there was any reason for the tapping on that particular spot, then?" Miss Sargent asked.

"To be sure I did. That is just where Miss Alice's picture used to hang, so that Sir Christopher could see it every morning when he woke. Sir Henry had the picture sold with all the others, and I thought that was why Sir Christopher couldn't rest in his grave."

I saw a look of disappointment steal over Miss Sargent's face.

"It may be that Mrs. Musgrave is right," she said thoughtfully. "Very often the spirits

seem to have very little motive—or what seems very little to us—for what they do."

"Well, we shall see," I responded, not willing to give up my hope on the poor orphan's behalf.

I had brought down an expert cabinet-maker from London, and he went to work quickly and neatly. A great space of the wall was stripped of its wainscot, and we searched anxiously for any sign of a hiding-place behind.

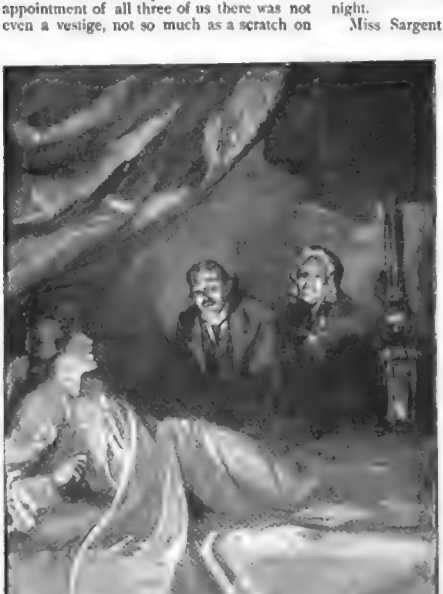
We searched vainly. To the bitter disappointment of all three of us there was not even a vestige, not so much as a scratch on the wall, to indicate that anything had ever been concealed there.

To complete our discomfiture the cabinet-maker gave it as his opinion that the wainscot had never been disturbed since it was put up in the reign of James I.

"I was right, you see, Miss," said good Mrs. Musgrave sorrowfully. "It's the thought of Miss Alice's picture that keeps Sir Christopher out of his grave."

She spoke as though the deceased baronet were an invalid suffering from sleeplessness at night.

Miss Sargent shook her head, but said nothing. She seemed to be reflecting deeply.



She was sitting half up in bed . . . appearing to stare with the most deadly fear at the opposite wall.

We left the cabinet-maker with strict instructions to replace the wainscot, so as to leave no trace of his operations, and went downstairs.

Half-an-hour later, as we were sitting at lunch, Miss Sargent suddenly spoke.

"You must let me sleep in that bed, Mr. Hargreaves. I am a clairvoyant in sleep, as you know, and I may see something which will explain the mystery."

We both returned to town in the afternoon to make our arrangements. The following day we came down again, prepared to spend the night.

None of us intended to go to bed. The four-poster in the haunted room had been furnished with blankets and pillows to serve as a bed for the clairvoyant. Mrs. Musgrave was to instal herself on a sofa before the fireplace, in which a fire had been lit, and I was to sit up in the next room, ready to come at the first call.

Miss Sargent, who fortunately possessed the power of falling asleep at will, retired to her strange couch a little before eleven, accompanied by

the housekeeper, whose excitement promised to keep her awake.

As for myself, I cherished no wish to sleep. I had provided myself with lights, cigars, and a book to read, but I am bound to confess that I found it impossible to get interested in it.

An hour later I heard a low tapping on the door of my own room.

Not a little startled, I sprang up, only to find that the sound this time was free from any element of mystery.

The old housekeeper had come to summon me.

"Will you come and see the young lady?" she said. "I think something is the matter."

I felt myself turning cold.

"What do you mean? Has the tapping begun?"

The answer surprised me.

"No, that is what frightens me. This is the first night I have not heard it for four months. But I think Miss Sargent sees something."

I led the way into the haunted room. There was not a sound to be heard, and the lights had been put out by the clairvoyant's desire. But she was sitting half up in bed, her eyes fast closed, and yet appearing to stare with the most deadly fear at the opposite wall.

Suddenly a sharp cry broke from her, followed immediately by the same frantic rush of half-articulated syllables which had so alarmed me on that night in the Green House.

"Leave—it—alone—leave—it—alone—leave—it—alone—put—it—back—put—it—back—put—it—back—*Ah, he's taken it!*"

With these last words, uttered loudly in distinct tones, the sleeper's eyes suddenly opened, and she gave a fearful shudder.

Tap! tap! tap!

If ever I have heard any sounds in my life I heard those knocks by an unseen hand on the wainscot at which we all gazed, unable to stir till the knocks ceased.

It was too much for the nerves of any of us to bear. I caught the half-fainting girl in my arms as she threw herself from the great four-poster, and the three of us did not breathe again till we were safe in the housekeeper's little sitting-room downstairs.

There, after she had rested and taken a soothing draught prescribed by the housekeeper, Miss Sargent related her vision.

"I saw a picture hanging on the wall, the picture of a young girl, about seventeen, with blue eyes and very light golden hair."

"Miss Alice!" the old lady interrupted.

"Two men came into the room, and moved about. I could not see what they were doing. Presently, one of them, who was in his shirt-sleeves, and looked like a work-

"At that instant I saw suddenly, appearing . . . in front of the picture, a corpse."

man, approached the picture, and raised his hands to take it down."

"One of the auctioneer's men, my dear," was Mrs. Musgrave's murmured comment.

"At that instant I saw suddenly, appearing from nowhere, in front of the picture, a corpse."

"A corpse!" we both ejaculated in horror.

"Yes, a dead man, in a winding sheet, with his head swathed in white bandages. The corpse seemed to try to thrust back

the living man. He went on without noticing it, and took down the picture, I can hardly describe how, but just as though the corpse were not there. The dead man seemed to try to detain him, but he walked off with it. Then I awoke."

A cry burst from the poor old housekeeper.

"It was my poor master," she moaned, "trying to save Miss Alice's nice picture."

The other said nothing, but bent her brows as though profoundly dissatisfied with this seemingly puerile interpretation of the mystery.

I watched her with expectation. I had come to look on Alwyne Sargent as a woman of more than ordinary powers of mind, apart altogether from her extraordinary occult faculty, and I confidently anticipated that she would not let the matter rest there.

"The picture must be replaced," she said, after a long interval of meditation. "We cannot leave things as they are. At all costs the picture must be found, and hung up there again, if it is only for one night."

"I should think that could be managed," I said, though I did not much relish the idea.

I saw that Miss Sargent wanted to make fresh trial of her clairvoyant powers, with the picture in its place, and I dreaded the injury which these agitating experiences seemed likely to do her.

However, I shared her feeling that the mystery must be probed to the bottom. The very next day I called on the auctioneers who had charge of the sale at Hailesbury Manor, and asked them to let me go through their books. I told them nothing except that I had been asked to recover a family portrait included in the sale by oversight.

They were very obliging, and with their assistance I found that a picture catalogued as "Portrait of a Girl" had been sold for £12 to a gentleman living at Sydenham.

I went out there the same evening, and saw the purchaser, who was a Common Councilman of the City of London, and evidently given to speculating in pictures, with which the house was crowded.

He saw his advantage, and drove a rather hard bargain with me, but in the end he agreed to let me have the picture to show to the client whom I pretended to have in the background, on my paying a deposit.

Then he led me upstairs to a small smoking-room, where I saw the picture hanging in an obscure corner.

With hands trembling with excitement, I took hold of the frame to lift it off the nail. As I did so, the nail itself gave way, and the precious portrait crashed to the ground, the frame coming in pieces.

I fell on my knees with a cry of dismay, when I was astonished to see, among the broken portions of the frame, a blue foolscap envelope indorsed in shaky handwriting—"*Will of Sir C. Weetman, Bart.*"

The will gave the whole of his property to his adopted daughter, Alice Weetman.

Human nature is a curious thing. As soon as I had made out the contents of the document thus miraculously discovered, and he knew that the picture was that of a young lady who had come into a great fortune, the owner insisted on my accepting it as a free gift for the fortunate heiress.

It now hangs, in its carefully restored frame, in its old place at the foot of the historic bed; and the tapping on the wainscot in Hailesbury Manor has been heard no more.

I was astonished to see . . . a blue foolscap envelope.

Photo by W. & D. Downey & Sons
William Marshfield, R.N.

SURVIVORS' TALES OF GREAT EVENTS

XII.—THE SAVING OF H.M.S. *CALLIOPE* AND THE LOSS OF H.M.S. *VICTORIA*.

FROM THE NARRATIVE OF WM. MARSHFIELD, R.N.

AS TOLD TO WALTER WOOD.

The teller of this thrilling double story, Mr. William Marshfield, R.N., has the extraordinary record of having shared in two events which are unparalleled in the annals of the modern British Navy—the saving of H.M.S. *Calliope* during a terrific hurricane at Samoa in 1889, and the loss of H.M.S. *Victoria*, which was rammed and sunk by H.M.S. *Camperdown* in the Mediterranean in 1893. As if that were not enough, Mr. Marshfield was actually ordered to join H.M.S. *Captain*, which foundered in the Bay of Biscay in 1870 with six hundred officers and men. He entered the Royal Navy from the mercantile marine, and retired after more than forty years' adventurous service. Mr. Marshfield was boatswain not only of the *Calliope*, but also of the *Victoria*.

I AM a superstitious man, a man with what are called presentiments. Everybody knows what presentiments are, but no one has ever been able to explain them. You are overwhelmed with a sense of coming evil—that is what presentiment means.

In the early part of 1870 I was drafted to H.M.S. *Captain*. From the moment that order was given I was so filled with a foreboding of disaster that I went the length of vowing that rather than go to sea in the ship I would leave the Service. It was no good reasoning with or laughing at me; it was useless to tell me that the *Captain* was designed by a famous man, and that he himself had so much faith in his vessel that he was going to sea in her. I refused to be laughed or talked out of my misgivings, and at last, by a stroke of luck, I got transferred to H.M.S. *Excellent*, gunnery ship.

The *Captain* sailed a few months afterwards, and during the night capsized in the Bay of Biscay, carrying with her nearly all her officers and men, as well as her confiding designer. Only the watch on deck, less than a score of souls, were saved.

Twenty-three years later I was ordered to join H.M.S. *Victoria*, the finest and most costly ship of war the world had ever seen. Again I had my deep misgiving. Why, I cannot tell; but before going on board I turned to some of the dock policemen and told them of my fear that something serious would happen. They laughed at me—and with good reason, because, so far as human skill and a nation's wealth could make her so, the battleship was perfect.

But I am getting on too fast. I have to go back to another story, which has nothing to do with presentiments, which was not a personal disaster at all, as disasters go, and which was yet an experience so harassing, so overwhelming, that I have never hesitated to say, and do not hesitate to repeat, that I would rather go through any other crisis of my life than live those awful hours again.

And that dismaying trial was the saving of H.M.S. *Calliope* in the hurricane at Samoa. I say *the* hurricane, because there is only one that occurred in those parts which sailors speak of and remember.

Apia Harbour is in Samoa, and Samoa is in the South Sea. In March, 1889, the tiny harbour was crowded with warships, brought together by a political crisis of which I need not say anything. There was the *Calliope*, a British third-class cruiser of 2770 tons—she is still in the Navy; the *Trenton*, *Vandalia*, and *Nipsic*, American; and the *Adler*, *Olga*, and *Eber*, German.

There we were, bottled up in a perfect trap of coral reefs, bunched together with the

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red fangs on three sides of us and the vast open sea in front. The reefs are terrible things at all times, and doubly awful when you are forced to lie so near them that you could hit them with a stone. At low water they were dry, with a surf always breaking on them from the tremendous rollers of the Pacific.

The hurricane did not sweep down upon us without warning. The barometer told us that something stiff was coming, and, as a matter of fact, we had three hard gales as appetisers. But with lower yards and topmasts struck, and the engines steaming so as to relieve the strain on the anchors, we had ridden the breezes out snugly enough. People ashore told us that the fall meant rain, and not wind, and we believed them. We were glad to do it. But the glass went down and down, and the sky grew perfectly black.

There was a dead, depressing calm; but on March 15 the wind rose and freshened, blowing almost straight into the harbour. It gained strength as the night came on, and all the time it was slowly working round so that it blew directly upon us. By midnight we were being lashed by the wind and smothered by the waves; but we were getting used to that sort of thing, and held up to it with our anchors down and the engines going ahead. So fierce was the wind that you would have thought it could not increase; yet it was tame compared with the hurricane which developed and raged throughout the middle and the morning watches.

Enormous seas drove in, meeting the waves which had been hurled against the shore behind us and cast back towards the harbour mouth. The harbour literally boiled. There was an appalling commotion—the screaming of the wind, the roaring of the waves, the thunder of the breakers on the beach and reefs, and the groaning and straining of the cruiser mingling in a deafening noise. And with it all there was the intense darkness and the pitiless rain. Men were furiously shouting to each other; but what could human voices do in such a storm as that? Why, your very words were driven back through your teeth.

No human vision in such a pall of blackness, such a smother of sea and rain, could tell whether our ship was riding safely or was being driven to destruction on the reefs, nor could the acutest hearing tell one howling, booming sound from another. Yet we hoped for the best, until the heaving of the lead and the slacking of our stern hawser told us the fearful truth that we were not holding our own, in spite of our strong anchors and powerful engines, and that the *Calliope* was being forced back.

There was no need to tell anyone what would happen in such a case. There was not a soul who did not understand the smashing power of those gigantic breakers—hills of water with the whole strength of the Pacific behind them, not a man who did not realise exactly what it meant to be hurled on to the huge coral teeth which mouthed and frothed at us on all sides except one. And on that side were swamping seas!

What happened during that unspeakable night was mercifully hidden from us till the daylight came—if you can describe as daylight an atmosphere which with mingled wind and sea and spume was like a yellow fog. Then the spectacle was so awful that we who were still safe might well have wished for darkness again to hide it from our view.

Disasters had begun early—calamities which were all the more piteous because no help or courage could avert them. Two foreign merchant ships had collided—smashed upon each other in the welter. One had sunk instantly, and the other went soon afterwards. Then the *Eber*, which was a gunboat, was picked up, hurled on to the reefs, smashed to pieces, and every soul on board drowned except five, who were saved by a miracle. They found themselves ashore—and that was all they or anybody else could tell.

That was the beginning of things, the opening of that fierce, protracted battle with the storm in which all knew we were engaged, for the warships were bundled in a heap, straining madly at their anchors and already breaking away, driving towards the reefs and destruction. Besides the ships of war there were the merchant vessels, so that there was quite a little fleet of various sorts of craft dragging together in hopeless confusion. And all these ships were targets for the storm, which charged upon and battered them with a fury that was diabolical.

The night wore on and the morning was fully with us. The hurricane had driven us slowly but resistlessly to within a few feet of the reef astern, and the huge seas were burying our ship as they roared in. The other ships were tumbling towards us and on top of us, and it was clear that our only hope of salvation lay either in gaining the open sea or beaching the *Calliope* on one particular

We passed her so dangerously close, that our yards actually went under hers as we rolled.

sandy patch. The former hope, forlorn as it seemed, was the best, and Captain Kane took hold of it. You can only appreciate the courage of that resolve when you understand that the chances were that our ship would not answer her helm, would not steer, and would therefore be hurled back and smashed.

The Staff Engineer was roused up for every ounce of steam he could give, and our only remaining cable was slipped, the whole force of the six boilers was transferred to the cylinders, and in turn to the propeller. At her best the *Calliope* had done nearly fifteen knots—that is, about seventeen miles—an hour, with nearly four thousand horse-power; but now, fighting for her very life, with the engines straining and the machinery in parts almost red-hot, she literally did not appear to move. She kept head to sea and was deluged by masses of green water, and she kept just clear of the reefs astern. We remained afloat and headed to sea, and for the time that was all we could claim to be doing. Repeatedly we shipped solid water so heavily that many a vessel would have foundered under the mere crushing weight of it.

With the engines exerting every ounce of their power the *Calliope* at length managed to do about a mile an hour, but for a long time after we began our forlorn fight she seemed not to move an inch. Imagine our triumphant exultation when we felt that she was really gaining speed enough to give her steerage-way, and that there was the faintest chance, but a chance still, of struggling out into the open sea. There it was dangerous enough, but not to be compared with the deadly trap of Apia Harbour—the trap in which the wild Pacific held its victims and remorselessly destroyed them.

We drove into the hurricane—drove blindly, because it was impossible to see either ahead, or around us. We might, for anything we could tell, have been going directly on to some part or other of the reefs skirting the harbour; but we had to risk that, and on we went, smothered in the turmoil, deafened and confused by it all.

Suddenly the *Trenton*, which was the American flagship, loomed up out of the tumult—straight in the fairway, directly in our path, and that path so small, so perilous! It was terrible to see her, more terrible, if that were possible, to think of our own extremity and lessened chances of escape. She was an old cruiser of 4000 tons, and the biggest ship in harbour. But by that time she was a floating hulk, hopelessly crippled, with her fires drowned, and clinging to her last and only hope of safety—her cables.

It was afternoon when we passed her, so dangerously close that our yards actually went under hers as we rolled. Her brave old admiral—Kimberley, he is dead now—was on the bridge, and as we fought our way past her we heard a cheer that rose even above the uproar of the storm.

A cheer at such a time! And why? Because, as he said afterwards, "it was a gallant thing," and our captain did it so well that it could not have been done better, and "because," he added, "blood *is* thicker than water." The admiral led the cheers himself, and we responded with a hoarseness that was not altogether due to the weather, bad as it was. Then we were hidden in the whirl of the spindrift, still driving blindly towards salvation, the only ship that would or could make an effort to reach the open water.

Now, I think you will understand what the motion of the *Calliope* was like when we were really punching into it. You may understand, I say. I hope so, because no words of mine can make you realise fully what actually happened. Those heavy warships were picked up and thrown about like chips by the savage seas, and the people on board were hurled about as furiously. There was no standing, no sitting, no lying down, unless you were clutching something.

One man, I remember, was thrown against the wheel, and had his teeth smashed; another, a carpenter, was torn off his feet, and as he landed back on deck he was hooked by the jaw on to some projection, and so badly mauled that he had to be invalided out of the Service. As for me, by some means that I cannot explain, I was gripped by the foot by a wire hawser which took a turn round my ankle, and I only got clear by cutting the rope with an axe. I was shuttle-cocked here and there, battered and bruised in a way that seemed incredible and is indescribable. But we were infinitely better off than the poor fellows in the other ships, of whom many were carried overboard bodily, or killed or crippled by the heavy seas.

You ask to what angle the *Calliope* rolled, and how much she pitched? Well, I cannot tell, but I suppose that according to all theorists she ought to have rolled over and pitched the vitals out of her as she fell head over heels or stern over stem. But she did none of these things; she plugged at it, through that awful hurricane and those tremendous seas which came from all quarters at once and raised a very whirlpool. How amazingly

she had been buffeted I knew from my own body at the finish of the fight. I was completely black with bruises; so much so, that when I went to the doctor I said: "Do you want to see a nigger, sir?" And he thought he saw one, too, when I unshipped a towel which was the only thing I was wearing just then as clothing. And I was merely typical of the rest of the ship's company. There was no officer or man who had not his bark or bruise or worse to show as a memento of his thrashing. When you remember what the seas were like, and how the wrecked ships were treated, you can only marvel more and more that the *Calliope* got clear of the harbour as she did, and that she saved herself.

Shall I tell you why I think she survived? Because she was British built, British engined, and British manned. That sounds boastful, maybe; I do not mean it to be so. It is only the bare and sober truth. Nothing but the finest and most honest workmanship could bear the punishment of that Pacific hurricane. We had both. Nothing but the best of British officers could have pulled us through. We had them also. And the engineers and stokers! Who can say enough of what they did, and what they had done, to have machinery so faultless!

I can see now, as vividly as we all saw then, the oilskinned-figure of our captain, as he clung to his place on the bridge. He was there at the beginning, he was there through it all, he was there at the very end. The seas smashed and smothered the cruiser. When the fog of the spume had vanished, when the solid green water had roared back into the sea from which it had been torn, he was there, soaking, battered, wearied, but undaunted still.

From first to last he gripped the bridge-rail, looking courageously ahead into the smother and turmoil of it all; from beginning to end he never flinched; and because of his example never a man of the ship's company flinched or weakened either. And I want to say to you, here and now, that in all my forty years at sea, I never knew a British Naval officer who in the hour of peril was not equal to the danger. I never knew one who did not meet it with a stiff upper lip. If there was a change at all compared with calmer, safer times, you only knew it because, perhaps, his language strengthened like the weather. But, after all, that is the way of the sea; and you must allow something for the weather and sailors, mustn't you?

My story of the *Calliope* is finished when I tell you that we got into the open sea and safety, with three anchors and three boats lost, and other damage done. For more than ten hours the engines had been thrashing her out, with never a flaw revealed in them. Wonderful performance! But then, if there had been a flaw of any sort, the ship would not have lived. She would have shared the fate of the rest; for when we returned to Apia on the 19th there was not a ship afloat. Four out of the seven men-of-war had been totally lost; two were stranded, and 130 officers and men were dead.

But of the *Calliope's* entire company not a soul was missing.

* * * * *

I am going to take you to a scene as different from the hurricane at Samoa as anything can be. I will take you from the tiny coral harbour and its roaring fatal seas to the placid waters of the Mediterranean; from the leaping, straining, tearing cruiser in her sea-welter, to a battleship that rides with rock-like steadiness on smooth blue water, from a danger which all men saw and knew to one which the keenest wit of man could not foresee, and that is to H.M.S. *Victoria*, the finest ship of her day, the admiration and envy of the whole world of sailors who knew what a fighting machine was and ought to be.

It was a perfect afternoon, on Thursday, June 22, 1893, and in a region where glorious weather is seen at its best—the coast of Tripoli. The last thing in the world that occurred to anybody was the idea of danger. Yet, in ten minutes, owing to an error of judgment on the part of our Commander-in-Chief while manœuvring, the *Victoria*, his flagship, had been rammed by the *Camperdown*, and had sunk, bottom upward, in nearly 500 feet of water, taking with her twenty-two officers and 350 men.

I am not going into technicalities—you do not want them—nor into details of the great disaster—those who wish for them can find them in the records of the court-martial and elsewhere; and I am not going to enter into any criticism of anybody. That is not my business. But I am going to say here, at the beginning, that some stories have been told about our gallant Commander-in-Chief, Sir George Tryon, which are only exceeded in their folly by their cruelty. He made a mistake, as all the world knows, by ordering the impossible, and he atoned for it like a brave man by sinking with his ship.

I was in my cabin, thinking of nothing more serious than tea. Tea was ready almost at once, and I crossed to the other

side of the ship to take some. The squadron was then nearing the place where we were to anchor, and all was going well.

Without the slightest warning there was a terrific thud, and for the moment I thought the *Victoria* had struck on a rock.

I heard a sound like that which is made by the running out of the bower-cable—just as if the anchor had been let go. As a matter of fact, I found the anchor safe in its place; but I still feel certain that the cable went through the bottom of the ship somewhere. It would touch the bottom of the sea at about seventy fathoms—more than 400 feet—and probably catch in something by making a bight, as we call it, or a loop. So you see, with both ends of the huge cable fast to the ship, if the bight caught hold of anything at the bottom of the sea, the sudden bring-up, or check, would sink any ship in our position. Let me make this point clear to shore people by saying that it would be like driving a pony and trap with the reins dragging. All at once the reins catch a stump, and down goes the pony, over goes the trap—and there you are. That may have happened to the *Victoria*, for all I know.

My place as boatswain was on the forecastle, and I rushed there instantly. A second was enough to make me understand what had happened. The *Camperdown* had rammed us, her stem striking our starboard bow, about twenty feet before the turret, and crushing into us almost to our centre line.

It was bad, terrible; but no one anticipated that the disaster would be so dramatic, so overwhelming, and, above all things, so sudden as it really was. There was commotion and excitement, but no panic whatever. The colossal ships parted, and the place that had been filled by the stem of the *Camperdown* admitted a perfect flood of water.

At such a crisis the first thing to be done is to get out what are called collision-mats, the object of which is to try to keep the water out. The mats were lowered over the side, and hung over the huge rent, but you might as well have put sheets of paper there, for water was coming in by the ton.

Even when it was recognised that the damage was so serious everybody kept cool and good-tempered, and thought of nothing but saving the ship. Yet we were on the very threshold of one of the swiftest naval catastrophes on record. It is perfectly certain that not a soul on board believed the end to be so near, or, indeed, imagined that the *Victoria* was doomed. So confident was the Admiral himself that the ship would be saved, that when he saw the boats of the *Dreadnought* being lowered to come to our help, he signalled that they should not be sent—only kept in readiness.

While I was seeing to my duties on the forecastle, the captain and other officers were moving swiftly about, on deck and below, to secure the safety of the ship, and, so that nothing should be left undone, the prisoners were released from the guard-room and the sick taken on deck. All, indeed, who were not wanted below, were ordered on deck, but there were large numbers of engineers and stokers at work—every man at his post.

It is hard for most people to understand what courage and discipline are necessary to make it possible for men who are cooped up below at such a time to hold fast to their duty. On deck there is just a chance of salvation; but away down, far below the water-line, literally imprisoned within steel walls, the hope is slight indeed. So vast and complicated, in fact, is the interior of a modern battleship that you may easily lose your chance of escape simply because you cannot find your way out to the open air. I had been in the *Victoria* two or three months, and yet so little was I acquainted with her interior that, believe me, if I had been below when she foundered I should inevitably have gone down with her, because I should not have known which way to turn to escape.

The first time the peril of our position struck me was when I saw that the *Victoria* listed suddenly and heavily to starboard—that is to say, she was leaning dangerously over on her right side. I exclaimed, "Lord! If I were the Admiral I'd pipe all hands to bathe! That would get us clear of the ship, and give us a chance if she goes!" As soon as I had said this I saw the futility of even such an order, because the *Victoria* was level with the sea forward, buried in the water, which was washing up to the turret.

The turret was a circular mass of steel, containing two guns, each a 110-ton weapon, and very famous in their day. The total weight of guns and turret was more than a thousand tons. As you know, a turret revolves with the guns, which it completely shelters, while a barbette carries the guns on the top, only the guns revolving. You can understand precisely what the *Victoria* looked like when you see the *Sans Pareil*, her sister ship—and a fine ship still. Just behind the turret were the conning-tower and the forebridge, above the forebridge was the chart-house, and the roof of the chart-house was what we called the monkey-bridge. Really

I struggled through the water as well as I could, and got to the hatch.

it was the Admiral's bridge, the spot from which he directed the movements of the fleet.

Sir George Tryon was a stout, heavy man, and generally sat in a chair on his little bridge. But he was standing now, having hurried to his place from the stern-walk, where he had been laughing and joking a minute before the collision. He and Staff-Commander Hawkins Smith, who died not long ago, were together, and the Admiral from that high position had a perfectly clear and unimpeded view of the awful havoc which had arisen from his strange mistake. I wonder if anyone has ever realised what his sensations were during those few minutes which passed between the ramming and the sinking of the flagship?

The forecastle was like a cataract by this time, and I was knee-deep in water. I looked up towards the monkey-bridge, and saw that the Admiral wanted me. He called out to me to go and see that the foremost hatch was properly closed down. I never saw him again—and I believe those were the last words he spoke. He had his hands on the rail, and never moved.

I struggled through the water as well as I could and got to the hatch. Then I knew that all was over, for the water which was filling the ship was bursting through the hatch. This meant, if it meant anything, that there was such a vast quantity of water flooding the ship that she would never get free of it.

It was now every man for himself. I dashed past the turret to the port side, which was high out of the sea, and met the gunner. He exclaimed: "Oh, Bill! What's up?"

I answered: "It's all right. We shall swim like thieves in a minute!"

I never saw him again. Almost instantly I ran up against Lieutenant Munro, and exchanged a few words with him. He hurried into the centre battery—and that was the last I saw of him, too. He was amongst the drowned. Those are little instances of the short meetings and long partings which took place when the *Victoria* was lost.

I am now coming to the most terrible part of my story—a part which I would fain pass over and forget for ever. But such a happening cannot be removed from your mind. It is tattooed on your memory.

With the same suddeness as she had been struck, the battleship heeled over—a long, resistless, sickening roll on her wounded side, over and over until her decks were vertical, and her funnels, one after the other—she had a pair, abreast—were in the sea. Then she capsized absolutely, shot head first into the blue waters of the Mediterranean, and with a sound of escaping steam, an explosion of the compressed air within her, and a mad whirring in the air of her twin screws, she disappeared. Just as she went over, her massive turret, with the two huge guns, broke adrift.

That I saw with my own eyes, and I have little doubt that the sudden breaking loose of such an enormous weight had something to do with the final heel.

The battleship, I say, went down, and I went with her. Swarms of men who had been drawn up on deck jumped into the sea. Some got clear of the vortex, and were rescued by the boats; some were carried down and never rose; some were caught on the blades of the propellers and cut to pieces.

I was standing by one of the anchor cables when she plunged, and I sank with the ship. Death seemed certain; yet, even then, I did not abandon hope. I saw just one slender chance of salvation, and that was to cling to the chain as long as possible, until I got clear of the vortex and suction at the surface, then to let go suddenly, give myself a twist to get as free of the sinking ship as I could, and trust to luck to shoot upward. Once afloat, I knew that my safety would be pretty well assured, because by this time boats were swarming on the water. I had this great thing in my favour—I kept cool. I kicked off one of my shoes—they were a black pair—almost, I imagine, the only pair of that colour on board, because it was the Mediterranean custom to wear white canvas shoes. But the other shoe was too tight to be kicked off, and I kept it on. Here it is—I have painted and decorated it, you see, and keep it as a relic and an ornament.

No one can realise what it meant to keep to that resolve to go down to the last extremity before letting go. There was the first dreadful plunge below the surface, then the swift sinking, the sudden change from light to growing gloom, from the glorious air to suffocation; the increasing pressure of the water, with the roaring in the ears, and, as it seemed, the bursting of the brain.

At such a time seconds seem like hours—if, indeed, you can measure mental agony by time. It is hideous enough when you are sinking voluntarily—what, then, of a time like that, with men dead and dying by the hundred all about you, clinging to a vast steel tomb, with the shock upon you of a catastrophe the like of which had never been known, and all

As soon as I bobbed up, one of the *Dreadnought's* boats made for me.

the more numbing because it was so unexpected?

I kept repeating to myself, "Let go and turn right," "Let go and turn right," "Let go and turn right," and in those few moments I had the strange expression burnt into my brain. I was a mere atom on the side of that colossal hull, a fly, as it might be, which is sticking to a block of metal that is sinking; and the proportion of strength was about the same, the chance of getting free and rising just as slight.

Not till all was deeply green and dark about me did I repeat my words for the last time; then, with the courage of despair and the energy of desperation, I released my hold, I let go and turned right, and made a furious bid for the surface. Lucky for me that I was a good swimmer, luckier still that I had trained my powers of endurance as a diver, and could keep below the water longer than most men.

I shot up swiftly, but it seemed as if I should never reach the top, never get the air again into my panting lungs. Any diver will understand; and those who do not dive or swim can know the sensation by plunging the head into a bath or basin and keeping it there, submerged, until they must either breathe or burst.

But the darkness gave place to growing light, there was a swift transition from oppression and gloom to freedom and sunshine. Never, I think, was liberty so sweet, never air so welcome, so life-renewing! As soon as I bobbed up, one of the *Dreadnought's* boats made for me. The water was dotted with boats from the neighbouring ships, and their crews were grabbing at the struggling survivors, those who had been fortunate enough to be on deck when the *Victoria* went over, and who, like myself, had kept clear of the screws and the vortex.

I was clutched by friendly hands, and was being hauled into the boat. Who can describe my feelings of joy and gratitude? Then an astonishing thing happened. I was let go—and why? Because somebody in the boat shouted: "Hullo! there's Lord——," mentioning a certain noble lord who was an officer in the *Victoria*, and who was floating about like the rest of us.

A lord is a lord all the world over, at all times—and they went for him and then came back for me. Exhausted though I was, I could not help begging them not to trouble about me till they were quite satisfied that there were no more noble lords afloat or awash, assuring them that as I had waited so long, an extra spell could not make any difference. But they did not waste words on me—they hauled me into the boat, and I collapsed. I realised at once how vain my sarcasm was, for I was so utterly done up that if I had been put back into the water I should have sunk like a stone and made no effort to save myself.

I was taken on board the *Dreadnought*, and found—so small is the world and so strange the meetings and coincidences of life—that the doctor who took charge of me was the doctor to whom I had presented myself as a nigger in the *Calliope*.

I was exhausted, stunned with the swiftness and magnitude of the disaster—but with vitality enough left to picture the descent to the dark sea-bed of that vast steel tomb in which, at any rate, the prisoners had found a mercifully speedy death.

Less than a quarter of an hour before, the proudest flagship in the world, representing a million pounds sterling, had been floating in security on a calm blue sea in brilliant sunshine, with the laugh and joke going round, a mass of strength, a home of life—and now she was still and buried in the darkness of the sea-bed nearly five hundred feet below us.

And the place where she had floated and made her last appalling dive was marked by struggling sailors and a torn, white sea.

✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦

OF WHAT AVAIL?

My lady love is, as a rule,
A trifle pale;
And—whether it be warm or cool,
Or blows a gale—
She's sure to wear, in any case,
Tied right across her charming face,
That thingummy of tulle or lace
She calls a veil.

Although I'd not presume to ask
The reason why
She always wears this filmsy mask
(Too wary, I),
The thought *has* struck me, once or twice,
She's following the good advice—
To keep, though only made of rice,
Your powder dry!

AFTER THE PARTY

YOUR IN PICTURE POST CARDS

The Kennels
Isle of Dogs
Dear Dolly
I sent thee a card
post card? Mr
Jack Smith and me
in his dogcart he took
me for a drive yesterday
morning before your party
he's promised to give me a
puppy also to be my mas-
band. I shall wear
white satin with
a dog collar of
pearls at the
wedding. Hope
youll come
yours Diana
Miss Dolly Dimple
Gooseberry Grove
Ducks Hill
W.
Miss Dolly Dimple
Gooseberry Grove
Ducks Hill
W
Hast and Hapes Grange
Just a line to
tell you that
Jack Smith
and I have
fixed it
up &
were
after
the sup-
per dance
he proposed
Hattie
Miss Dolly Dimple
Gooseberry Grove
Ducks Hill
W

The Story of a Masquerader's Downfall.

By Ward Muir.

Young Leslie Millworth's bathing costume was an exceedingly *chic* affair, with cream stripes on a scarlet ground; but after he had taken a dip in it and dried it in the sun, the glorious tints faded to mere sketches of their former selves, and Fred Potter said they made him think of the ghost of a zebra. Dora Potter laughed, and Millworth tried to laugh, too, because he was in love with Dora. Professor Potter condescended to join in the laugh, as this gave him an opportunity for a discourse on fabulous animals—krakens, and hippogriffs, and centaurs. Professor Potter was the greatest authority on mythical creatures in the whole world; but he was a dreadful bore all the same; and his summer guests heard with thankfulness that he had reached the last chapter of his monumental work on "Legendary Monsters and their Origin in Phrase and Folk Lore."

"I confess I have made no allusion in my book to marine zebras," he boomed. "But I venture to think that few other classical creatures are not touched upon in what is, I flatter myself, the most exhaustive treatise——"

Millworth and Fred and Dora sighed in unison.

"The chapter on mermaids," continued the Professor, "is complete, except for some illustrations——"

"Wouldn't it be possible, uncle, to get some authentic photographs of mermaids in this district?" queried Fred Potter flippantly. "I'm positive I've caught sight of a mermaid or two——"

The Professor seemed more taken aback than the remark warranted.

"Photograph a mermaid? You've seen ——?" His expression sharpened. "Mermaids? Hereabouts? You've seen them?" he repeated in an undertone; and then fell into a reflective silence.

Millworth and Dora seized the opportunity to escape for a stroll along the cliffs. Fred made a move to do likewise; but the

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Professor peremptorily signalled him to remain.

The *tête-à-tête* of the lovers was shortly interrupted by the arrival of Fred, breathless and bubbling with great news.

"Such a joke!" he gasped. "It turns out that uncle has several times thought he saw a mermaid at the Haven, when he's been walking past there in the evenings. He took it for granted (so he says) that it was an optical illusion; you know how groggy his sight is; but when he heard I'd seen mermaids, too, he—well, he was on to me like one o'clock. I said I hadn't cared to mention it to him before, because I thought he'd laugh at me; but I was nearly positive I'd seen a mermaid loafing about on fine nights. So what do you think? We're going to hunt mermaids at the Haven this very evening! He has seen something, that's plain. I'd have said it must be somebody bathing, but the Haven is *private*, and nobody can get at it but ourselves. Personally, I'm off on my bike to Starbeach to buy a camera. I'm going to try to snap the mermaid—if we see her."

And Fred departed in high spirits.

"It'll be great sport, won't it?" began Millworth; but when he looked at Dora he paused. "What's wrong?" he asked.

"Nothing—that is—yes," she stammered. "Oh, if I'm found out, Fred and uncle will be in such a rage."

"Found out?"

"You see, it's this way. I'm not allowed to bathe. Uncle doesn't approve; and Fred would be shocked if he knew I used your bathing-place; you know what brothers are! So I slip down there in the evening and splash about by myself for a while, and—it's so delicious, you know, after sunset, because the air is cool and the water warm; and I know there's nobody within miles, so I sometimes sit on the rock in the middle of the bay, and sing and look at the sky, and—uncle has seen me, though I didn't guess it. How he could have mistaken me for a mermaid in my floppy blue bathing-gown"—she trilled with laughter—"it's not faded like the ghostly zebra-skin, you know! But uncle was positive no girl ever used the Bathing Haven, and no wonder he thought——"

"No wonder!" echoed Millworth, with unfeigned delight.

"What is to be done?" concluded Dora.

"Nothing," answered Millworth promptly.

"But it seems such a shame that uncle should be——"

"Should be done out of his mermaid? I quite agree with you. But you can't very well risk posing again."

"I would, if it weren't for Fred," she retorted. "Fred might recognise me, though; and he'd be furious. Brothers are so——"

She turned to Millworth, and laid her hands on his shoulders.

"Leslie," she cried, "*you* can be the mermaid."

"Oh, can I?" murmured Millworth feebly, trying to retain her hands.

She drew them away.

"Why not? You could put on that washed-out bathing costume of yours. It would look pale and spiritual in the dusk. And drape yourself with seaweed, and——"

"I doubt whether, even so, I'd pass muster as a mermaid," objected Millworth. "Mermaids are beautiful, and long-haired, and——"

"Rouge, and eyebrow paint, and a yellow wig!" cried Dora. "Now, Leslie, you absolutely must do it. To please *me*."

This time she let him take her hands and keep them.

"To *please me*," she repeated alluringly. "Just once. To sit for half-an-hour or so on the rock and sing——"

"I can't sing," said Millworth, clutching at straws.

"Never mind; make a squeaking sort of noise; anything will do. Comb your wig—I'll lend you a big comb—and make pretty movements with your arms——"

"Pretty movements with my——"

Millworth allowed one of Dora's hands to drop, and meditatively fingered his biceps.

"Pretty movements with my—" he repeated, and then burst into a roar of laughter. "By Jove, Dora, I'll do it!" he exclaimed.

* * * * *

Concealed in a vantage-point on the top of the cliff, Dora overlooked the Haven, and spent a most entertaining evening. Millworth, a magnificent theatrical coiffure of peroxide hair flowing to his shoulders, and draped with trailing seaweed, looked the part better than she had dared to hope. The rapidly-falling twilight helped the illusion.

Perhaps the only failure in the whole scheme was Millworth's attempt to sing. His artificial falsetto broke badly on an ambitious top-note, and thereafter he was wisely silent, and confined his realism to an extraordinarily persistent combing of his utterly uncombable

The two men crawled down the beach with extreme care, as though fearful of frightening their prey.

locks. His feet and nether limbs were discreetly immersed in the water.

The behaviour of Professor Potter and Fred testified to the former's incredulity of his own previous observations, and the latter's bewilderment at the unexpected confirmation of them.

"Goodness gracious, it's there already!" was all the old man could gasp—as though the main cause of his surprise were the fact that the mermaid was more punctual in her arrival than they were.

As for Fred—he was thunderstruck and speechless. He gazed open-mouthed across at the rock in the middle of the Haven, and completely forgot his photographic equipment.

The two men crawled down the beach with extreme care, as though fearful of frightening their prey, and the irreverent Dora had the utmost difficulty in stifling her laughter at the attempts of her aged and somewhat rheumatic uncle to imitate the tactics of a Fenimore Cooper Red Indian. Arrived at the brink of the Haven, their advance had perforce to cease, and there was a muttered consultation.

"Shall I swim out to it?" Fred suggested, and Dora's blood froze at this unexpected danger.

"Why should you?" queried the Professor, with a not unnatural suspicion. He had vague memories of the fatal attractiveness of mermaids.

"I might manage to catch it," Fred explained lamely.

"Mph!" The Professor was doubtful—very doubtful.

"Maybe I could persuade it to come ashore with me and——"

"You don't suppose it would understand, if you spoke to it!" The Professor was scornful now, as well as suspicious.

"Perhaps with your knowledge of foreign languages——" hinted Fred.

"Nonsense," said the Professor decisively. "We must take the utmost pains not to frighten it away, I tell you. If we keep quiet it will be here again to-morrow: it has been here regularly every time I passed. To-morrow we will make some more observations; and then the following day I shall wire to my friend Professor Smithson, and get him to come down and help to capture it. We can hire men with fishing-nets, surround the Haven, and——" The Professor went off into speculations how best to effect the ensnaring of this prize. "But meanwhile, Fred, my boy, not a word to anybody—not even to your sister or to Millworth."

So, as the darkness fell, Fred and the Professor withdrew, to be back home in time for dinner in order not to excite curiosity; and when after dinner the eager Fred returned surreptitiously to the cove, to make observations on his own account, the mermaid had naturally vanished. But that night Dora and Millworth had a great deal to talk about.

* * * * *

Neither Dora nor Millworth could resist the temptation to repeat their joke the following

evening. Fred had looked so irritatingly important and mysterious all day, and the Professor had boomed so incessantly of what a sensation his book would make when published, that they felt no possible excuse for shirking a renewal of the deception. When Professor Smithson and the men with the fishing-nets arrived, there would be no mermaid to welcome them; but in the meantime it would be a shame to bring her earthly career to an end so soon.

At sunset, then, we behold in the Haven the same drama being enacted: the Professor and Fred—armed this time with quite a battery of cameras—worming their way down the beach to the shore—Millworth artistically swaying and combing on his perch of mid-ocean rock—and Dora eavesdropping comfortably from up aloft. Millworth had wanted to be allowed to add a gramophone to his stock of accessories, to provide the necessary tunefulness; and at first sight the proposition seemed a brilliant one; but investigation had shown that the only records to be obtained in the adjacent town of Starbeach were those of comedians' patter songs, and renderings of popular coon melodies by music-hall "harmony quartettes." Neither "Ma Lovely Lu" nor "The Kipper and the Tripe" being quite suited to the repertoire of the conventional mermaid, the gramophone idea was reluctantly abandoned, and Millworth was dumb as before.

Professor Potter and Fred were by no means silent, however. Their camera-shutters clicked incessantly, in defiance of the dying light and the distance of the object they wished to immortalise; and they carried on an excited whispered conversation. Fred's back was burdened with an enormous knapsack, from which, when the pair had reached a suitably sheltered spot at the cliff base, he unpacked a wonderful stock of paraphernalia: two big rugs, two waterproof capes, note-books galore, and—lastly—a mysterious parcel done up in brown paper, and a flask.

"Those the sandwiches?" said the Professor. "Good! When it gets late we must take it turn about to watch. One of us can snatch a little sleep now and then. I am particularly anxious to know how long the creature remains on its rock, and whether it swims away to some other haunt, or dives straight down and disappears."

Dora listened horrified. What was to be done? These two were obviously in earnest. They were going to encamp for hours and hours and——

Millworth would catch his death of cold waiting for them to go. Indeed, if he did wait, he would only be found out when morning light came.

Dora crept away, and as soon as she was out of range of possible detection, she rose to her feet and ran.

Darkness fell, as deeply as darkness ever does fall at the seaside in midsummer. A faint after-glow hung over land and water—just enough to reveal the rock and its weary occupant. Long ago Millworth had ceased to comb. Even his well-developed biceps were not equal to the continuous strain. His head drooped with fatigue. His feet were getting frightfully benumbed. The peroxide wig was dew-wetted, and very heavy. He vowed he'd never be a mermaid again.

Yet he dared not stir. Dora had not given him the longed-for signal that the coast was clear; and, indeed, by turning his head he could distinctly catch a glimpse of two dark patches at the cliff's foot which he knew to be the Professor and Fred. Now and then Fred lit a cigarette—Millworth could see its intermittent glow. How he envied one whiff of that grateful tobacco! But even if he had had a cigarette, he could not have smoked. Mermaids have a reputation to lose.

Suddenly Fred gave vent to a low exclamation. The Professor echoed it. A boat had shot round the point, and was being rowed vigorously towards the rock. The figure in the boat looked strangely like that of a girl.

"That'll frighten the mermaid away!" groaned the Professor. "Can't we——?"

But the mermaid was by no means frightened. The boat contained salvation—and Dora.

"Funny—the mermaid doesn't seem to mind the proximity of the boat," muttered the Professor anxiously. "Look—it has reached the rock; the rower is speaking to the mermaid—the mermaid"—the Professor had his eyes glued to a field-glass—"Fred! the mermaid is getting into the boat—scrambling over the gunwale. Fred! the mermaid has *legs!*"

Professor's Potter's voice failed him at this awful revelation. Fred's wits were more easily retained.

"It's a fraud!" he cried, jumping up. "Some girl or other has been playing a trick on us, uncle. Let's go after that boat in the motor-launch. I can get her out of the boat-house in two seconds. We'll catch them, whoever they are!"

No sooner said than done. Hardly had Dora's boat, now rowed by Millworth

disappeared round the point, before the Professor and Fred were racing in its wake in the former's little petrol launch.

The chase was an exciting one. Millworth bent madly to his oars. In the stern, Dora urged him to greater exertions every moment. She was terrified of what would happen if they were captured. Millworth—grotesquely pulling beneath his rouge and wig—was no less alarmed. He foresaw a very unpleasant quarter of an hour with Professor Potter, and all hopes of winning Dora's hand lost for ever by thus grossly offending her guardian.

On and on along the coast sped the two boats—the beating of the launch's screw sounding ever nearer and nearer. The chase was hopeless.

"It's no good," whispered Millworth tensely. "I'll take the boat near the shore, and jump overboard and swim to the beach. Meanwhile, you'll row away as fast as you can, beach the boat in the next bay, and skedaddle. They'll follow me, sure as fate. I'll run like the wind, and they'll never catch me once I'm on dry land. I'll get clear away, and so will you, if we're smart."

The plan was desperate; but so was the situation. Thus it was that the pursuers suddenly saw the mermaid poise for an instant on the seat of the boat, and then plunge into the sea. Simultaneously, the girl leapt for the oars, picked them up, and rowed on, making for the next small headland.

Alas, the mermaid had forgotten the existence of its wig when it so boldly dived for freedom.

The wig swung round over Millworth's face, blinding his eyes as he rose to the surface, and filling his gasping mouth with horrible spongy hair. He had to stop to disentangle his head from it and throw it away, and the pause lost him the race. He reached the beach precisely as the launch's keel jarred on the sand at his side.

The Professor, grasping in one hand the sodden wig, which he had picked as a trophy from the sea, advanced majestically on the uprising "mermaid," whom he did not recognise.

"Who are you?" he demanded in awful tones, his eyes wandering resentfully to Millworth's legs. Those legs had been the last straw.

Fred's eyes were sharper than the Professor's. He saw through the dripping seaweeds, recognised the ghostly lines of faded colour on the bathing costume, and incontinently burst into a roar of laughter. "Why, it's old Leslie!" he cried. Another paroxysm of mirth choked him.

"This is no laughing matter, Fred," boomed the Professor, adjusting his eyeglasses the better to view his capture. "Mr. Millworth, will you kindly explain your conduct, sir?"

Millworth was speechless.

"I will explain it for you, Mr. Millworth." The Professor took up the tale, more boomingly than ever. "You have played a foolish practical joke upon one who was your host, sir; have tempted him to expose himself to the ridicule of the scientific world; have made him risk his health in the night air——"

"Who was the girl?" interjected Fred.

"Yes, sir, we may well ask, who was your accomplice?" the Professor eagerly seized on the point. "I think my nephew is probably mistaken in supposing that your accomplice was a female, Mr. Millworth. The badness of the light is deceptive. I insist on knowing, firstly, what was your object in this childish performance; and who it was that assisted you to escape—or tried to do so?"

"I must sincerely beg your pardon, Professor," said Millworth humbly. "But I cannot answer your question. The whole thing was a stupid practical joke on my part; and the person who came with the boat had nothing to do with it——"

"Indeed I had!"

The trio turned, and beheld Dora, who had seen the capture, and immediately landed, and flown to the rescue.

"Leslie shan't take all the blame like that!" she persisted.

"What on earth are you talking about, Dora?" cried the Professor.

"You caught sight of me bathing," the girl explained breathlessly; "and when you told Fred you wanted him as a witness, I was going to go and sit on the rock myself, as a joke; and I mentioned it to Leslie, and he simply wouldn't hear of me doing such a thing. He said it was improper, and I'd catch cold, and you wouldn't approve, and—and—" Dora's inventive faculties ran dry at this point.

"Ah!" boomed the Professor. Dora was undoubtedly making out an uncommonly good case for Millworth.

"I insisted on posing as the mermaid," Dora went on, "and Leslie said that rather than let me do so he would pose himself, as he knew you would be so dreadfully angry with me if I were caught; and on the other hand you'd be equally angry if you found out I'd been bathing. I forced him to do it, you

see; it was simply chivalry on his part, and obstinacy on mine. When I discovered that you and Fred were going to stop all night, I felt I couldn't let you do so, or him either, so I ran and got a boat and took him off. And you see that when he found we were being caught up, his sole thought was still to save me from your anger, uncle. He diverted your attention from me; and I got away; and he'd never have told on me, whatever had happened. He'd have taken nobly the whole blame——"

Millworth began to feel quite a hero.

"No, really," he stammered; "Dora, you mustn't——"

But the Professor's boom must now be heard.

"I can see that this was a foolish freak on Dora's part, solely, Mr. Millworth; and I apologise for speaking so harshly to you. You were wrong to act as you did; but you had what was a manly reason. Allow me to offer you this mackintosh coat, from the launch."

And the quartette bent their steps dinnerwards.

* * * * *

"Really, Dora needs looking after!" said the Professor that evening. "I feel quite nervous with such a flighty girl on my hands. I wonder whether she has ever thought of marriage——?"

Fred said that it was just conceivable.

It was not long, therefore, before the amateur mermaid had his reward. The Professor's wedding-present was a handsome cheque, and a copy of the newly-published "Legendary Monsters and their Origin in Phrase and Folk Lore." The book possesses no photographic illustrations.

The Professor, grasping in one hand the sodden wig . . . advanced majestically on the uprising "mermaid."

Which, however, is not the fault of Fred Potter. His snap-shots of the mermaid—enlarged and retouched with loving care—are the admiration of all who may be privileged to behold them where they hang above the mantelpiece in Mr. and Mrs. Millworth's private snuggery. When the Professor comes to call, the pictures are judiciously removed—not because the old chap would be offended, of course," as Leslie explains, "but his appreciation of modern art is about on a level with his appreciation of a joke."

"All the same," says Dora Millworth, "we mustn't be too hard on his lack of humour, seeing that it made him consent to our marriage, dear!"

PICTURE PARAGRAPHS.

Readers are Asked to Submit Pictures Suitable for These Pages.

Payment is Made for –

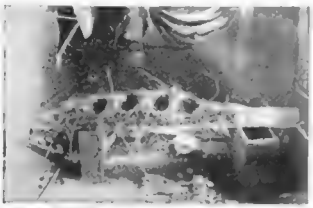
Residents in the Colonies and Abroad are Specially Invited to Contribute.

All Pictures Used.

A pumpkin large enough for a boy of fourteen to curl up and go to sleep inside.

A STRANGE NESTING-PLACE.

This strange situation—a shed in an Edinburgh road—was chosen by four blackbirds as a "desirable building site."



The nests of four blackbirds which built on a toolshed shelf.

It is interesting to know that they reared their families quite successfully in this novel home, and in due course departed, leaving their nests behind as a keepsake for the owner of the shed.

Town birds, as is well known, have a great deal more assurance than the feathered denizens of the country, and possibly the explanation of the strange choice of these blackbirds is to be found in that fact.

And yet there are many instances of birds in the country choosing some strange place to build in, and returning annually to it, although surrounded by many more likely nesting-places.

Therefore, these cases of birds building in peculiar spots may be set down as arising simply from whim.

SOMETHING LIKE A PUMPKIN.

This enormous pumpkin was grown by Samuel E. Roadster, of Carpentaria, Cal., U.S. The vegetable weighed 330lb., and took first prize at a recent exhibition in the States of the Cosmopolitan Farmers' League.

Mr. Roadster's fourteen-year-old son recited a nursery rhyme from within the pumpkin on that occasion, and his father distributed pies made of the meat scooped out of the monster exhibit.

THE NEW ZEALAND HOT SPRINGS.

The unique hot springs and geysers of New Zealand testify to tremendous volcanic activity in the past. The warm waters, of sulphurous origin, which have been left in vast pools after the subsidence of the land, have been known for some time by the nickname of "coffee cups," for it is the custom of the Maori men and women in the district, not only to cook their food in the hot pools, but also to bathe in them.

Culinary operations in full swing at the New Zealand hot springs.

In India, babies a few months old are placed under a stream of water, which falls on their heads. This is supposed to avert disease.

WATER BABIES.

Fond mothers all the world over have strange fads and fancies concerning their off-spring. Many boast pet remedies for all the little ailments that children are heir to, and most, in like manner, have a favourite medicine or tonic wherewith to dose their long-suffering young.

Quaint customs regarding children are numerous, and not the least peculiar is one which exists in Northern India, under the shadow of the mighty Himalayas.

In this happy spot babies a few months old are placed under running water so that it falls continually on their heads.

The villagers have an idea that this procedure will avert disease and witchcraft (the two being associated with each other in their minds) in after life.

So, from the age of a few months to about five years, the children are taken daily to some convenient spot where there are several of these hill streams, and are laid immediately below the fall of the water, and allowed to remain there for three or four hours at a time in the care of some old woman from the village.

This is done twice a day, morning and evening. Often so many as nine or ten children may be seen at once lying under their water spouts in some shady ravine, nearly always asleep, so that it may be inferred that this weird proceeding has a soothing effect on the nerves of the little ones.

Whether the desired result ensues, so far as disease and witchcraft are concerned, it is impossible to say.

Anyhow, there is no doubt that the mother believes in the treatment, and "faith moves mountains."

A CURIOUS HORSE ACCIDENT.

One of the most singular sights ever witnessed in New York was a curious accident which took place at one of the excavations for the new electric railway in Fourth Avenue. A horse fell over the side of a deep pit, and was suspended for several hours head downwards, while hundreds of persons worked to rescue the poor brute.

The harness and shafts of the waggon to which it was attached held the animal up, and it was finally extricated from its perilous position. The horse seemed, from the very first, to realise its great danger, for it kept remarkably still throughout the proceedings. The pit over which it was suspended for so many hours was some forty feet deep, and little hope of getting it out alive could have been been entertained had the harness given way.

As it was, the quadruped's position was by no means enviable. Few would care to be suspended head downwards for several hours, leaving the chance of a forty foot fall out of the question.

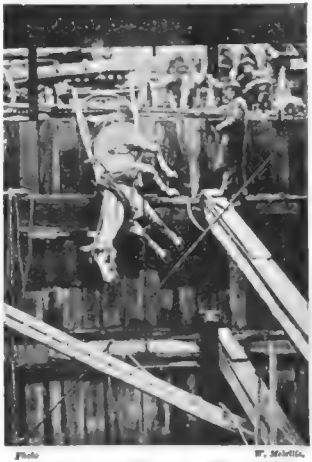


Photo W. Melville.

Owing to the strength of its harness, this horse did not fall down the well, which was forty feet deep.

THE RATTLESNAKE KING.

MR. PETER GRUBER, of Rochester, New York, U.S., is the bearer of this extraordinary title. He has discovered that rattlesnakes possess qualities which are now, and will be in the future, of the greatest benefit to mankind.

Not only can the venom of the snake be called to the assistance of the doctor, but no better masseur can be obtained than the muscular reptile itself. Goitre is the disease for which rattlesnake massage is prescribed, and the snake does good work in reducing the well-known swelling accompanying this malady.

When Mr. Gruber has a new patient, he first accustoms him to the sight of the rattlesnake which is to help in his cure. In treating goitre, the snake is coiled several times around the patient's neck, where it presses upon and works all the tissues in a remarkable manner.

A patient being treated for goitre.

The virus of the rattlesnake is used in the preparation of diphtheria antitoxin. It costs £5 per dram.

Experiments are being made to ascertain its efficiency in such malignant diseases as leprosy and lockjaw; and much is hoped for from it in the relief of humanity's aches and pains. It is astonishing how rapidly the mistaken sense of repulsion fades completely from the mind of a man who becomes familiar with the wrongfully traduced snake.

A FRUITFUL VINE.

THE great reduction in the price of dessert grapes during the last ten years or so has been very much to the benefit of the public, for it is now recognised that for man, woman, or child, in health or in sickness, there is no more wholesome or pleasant food than good grapes, acting as they do on every organ of the body, and containing, when fully ripe, every constituent of healthy blood.

To meet the enormously increased demand fruit growers are wisely erecting extensive glass houses and adding grape cultivation to their everyday business.

The illustration shows the interior of one of a series of large houses at Sipson, some ten or twelve miles from London, where, in a house 600 feet long, between three and four tons of grapes are ready for cutting.

The grape vine is most wonderfully fruitful, and would soon exhaust itself by over-production, hence the clusters have to be carefully thinned. The berries also require thinning—a cluster of black Hambro with 120 berries may usually with great advantage be reduced to half that number. The vine, spread over the entire roof of this spacious grape house, with great clusters of fruit plainly visible down the whole length of it, certainly presents a most delightful and tempting appearance.

Photo W. A. Campbell.

One of the great grape houses at Sipson, near London.

GARDENING FREAKS.

A New Departure in Horticulture.

Who remembers the time when there was not a popular craze? It seems impossible for people to exist without some pet fad or other, be it never so trivial or foolish. Ladies especially have a weakness in this direction, though with them it usually takes the form of a new pet animal.

The gardening profession has not escaped the general search for novelties, and a year or two ago Japanese fern-balls were all the rage; also quaint fern figures were formed to represent various birds and animals. These were readily bought by the novelty-seeking public.

The latest quaint idea of the gardener is clay model heads, the faces of which are marked by all manner of queer expressions. Around the scalp where the hair should grow, on the eyebrows, and on the upper lip, the models are cut in lines, which reduces the clay to such a thickness that it is porous. These model heads are hollow,

Photo "They grew in beauty side by side." Clarke & Hyde.

Photo A study in beard and whiskers. Clarke & Hyde

Photo The heavenly twins a little further developed. Clarke & Hyde.

and have to be kept filled with water, and on the prepared places a special fine grass seed, which is supplied with the heads, is sown. In the course of a week a fine crop of lovely silky grass sprouts out, giving the heads a very quaint and bright appearance. As the water evaporates or leaks through, the heads must be refilled.

Quite a surprising number of different expressions and types can be produced with the same head, by varying the growth from an abundant crop in one place to a ragged growth in another, or entirely omitting to sow the seeds in various places. A clean-shaven, bald-headed, benevolent old gentleman can be portrayed faithfully on the same head that with a different growth will show a man with abundant hair and long beard. Eyebrows can be grown or omitted at will, and since the heads are modelled with comical expressions to start with, when grown in quaint designs they are certainly the most mirth-producing garden decoration that has been invented.

The "fleet" at anchor. "Line ahead."

WHEEL MANŒUVRES.

THE TACTICAL EXERCISES OF A SQUADRON AT SEA.

No prettier sight can be witnessed than a fleet of war ships manœuvring at sea. At the command of the Admiral, whose orders are conveyed by signals from the yards of his flagship, or by the big waving semaphore arms, the vessels twist about—passing and repassing each other like dancers on the floor of a ball-room.

Wheels manœuvring for "Turning to line abreast."

Nautical spectacles such as these cannot be shown in reality to the landsman, but the resourceful handyman has hit upon a good substitute for the real thing, and with heavy gun-wheels the men show on land how tactical movements are executed at sea.

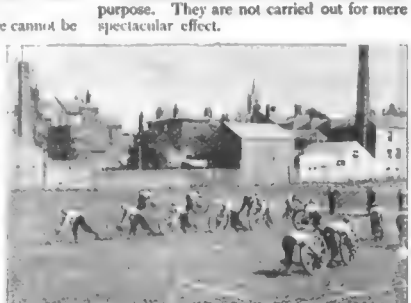
These wheels represent ships, and considerable strength, as well as skill, is required to manipulate them, as each weighs 1350lb. Beginning with "Line ahead," the "fleet" spreads out, and after bearing off into two divisions, comes back into single file again. Next, the course is altered, and the fleet separates into two divisions, this manœuvre being skilfully executed with a turn of the "helm."

Spectators, of course, are expected to exercise their fancy to the extent of persuading themselves that each tar trundling a wheel is one of His Majesty's ships, and is changing direction at the orders of the Admiral.

Falling out into two divisions is a very pretty manœuvre, and done with great celerity. Then we see the "fleet" marshalled for "line abreast," a position into which the ships are brought by turning "half right" or "half left," as a soldier would describe it.

This formation is preliminary to the famous "gridiron," the movement which the Mediterranean Fleet was practising when the *Camperdown* sank the *Victoria*. When performing this evolution ships pass and repass each other at no great distance apart. Next, the fleet breaks away into sub-divisions, forming two columns. This is a very usual formation for cruising.

All these manœuvres have a workmanlike purpose. They are not carried out for mere spectacular effect.



The famous "Gridiron movement." It should be noticed how the ships meet, and turn to "Line ahead."

An enthusiastic crowd watching the French Fleet off Southsea.

A STUDY IN UMBRELLAS.

THE numerous enthusiasts who went to see the French fleet at anchor off Southsea during its recent visit to our shores evidently did not intend to let rain damp their spirits.

Seldom has a more goodly collection of umbrellas been seen than the one which arose, mushroom like, on Southsea beach when rain welcomed the warships of our neighbours to that watering place.

Still, on the whole, our climate treated "Mathurin" very well during his stay among us, and did away with an idea prevalent in France that in this country it is always either raining or going to rain.

Long and bitter experience has, however, taught the Englishman, and especially the English girl, that appearances are deceptive, and that the bluest skies may soon become overcast. How many of our sisters have wept sore over the pulpy presentment of what was once a summer hat! It is from experiences like this that the English learn to carry umbrellas.

However, the uses of adversity are sweet, and experience is cheap, even when bought at the price of a hat, and that hat a lady's. Yet doubtless a lady would not recognise this; still less her husband, who would have to provide new headgear.

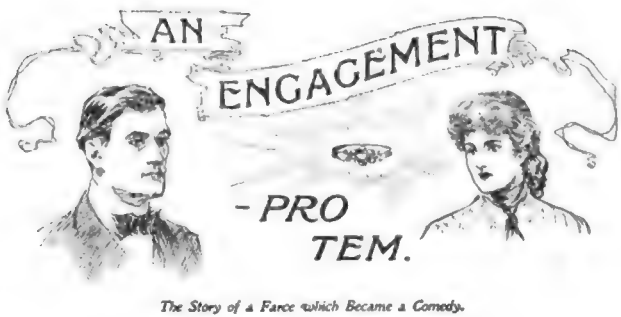
ONE OF THE WORLD'S TALLEST WOMEN.

MISS ROSA WEDSTEAD can claim to look down, physically, at any rate, on most people. She is twenty-two years of age, and has attained to the respectable stature of seven feet three and a-half inches.

When it is remembered that a man six feet high is considered tall, and that the average height of men in England is 5ft. 7¾in., Miss Wedstead's measurement appears all the more remarkable.

A little drawback incidental to being exceedingly tall is the inadequacy of ordinary furniture. Beds and chairs fall woefully short of the ideal. Yet, when all is said and done, great height has its advantages. No *matinée* hat need ever have any terrors for those upwards of seven feet high.

Rosa Wedstead, who is seven feet three and a-half inches tall.



The Story of a Farce which Became a Comedy.

By Tonman Couper.

There are some girls whose faces make you think instinctively of a newly-opened flower, and hers was one of them. It was fresh with the ethereal freshness of a June rosebud. Her hat was of that convenient "floppy" kind which can, at the pleasure of the fair wearer, instantly eclipse the face beneath. To others, however, the said quality is frequently tantalising in the extreme.

He had already found it so!

Being a man he merits no description, save that he was young and accounted good-looking. Both were members of Charles Halkett's Light Opera Company, and had but recently escaped from the arduous labours of a rehearsal. They were sitting side by side on the pier, apparently absorbed in the strains of the band. Conversation had been suspended for some time, she being fully occupied in trying to keep the tears out of her eyes, and in wrestling with an obtrusive lump which *would* keep rising in her throat.

"Of course, I knew there would be a heap to put up with. I wasn't so foolish as to think it would be all roses," she observed at last in airy tones, which might have imposed upon her companion, only that he happened to notice the mutinous quivering of her lips. She must also have been aware of their treachery, for the hat-brim swooped downwards, revealing to his gaze nothing but a vast expanse of straw, with here and there an oasis of daisies.

"You mustn't take what Murdoch says to heart. He treats everyone alike, and, as managers go, he's not a bad sort," he observed cheerfully to the nearest bunch of daisies.

"I know it's absurd to mind, only—it's trying to be rowed when you're faithfully doing your best. And then the others didn't attempt to help, they hardly gave me the cues. Miss L'Estrange and Mr. Durand could have made it ever so much easier if they had liked. You were in the wings—you must have seen!"

"Oh, yes, I saw; but you'll find that sort of thing everywhere," he said grimly. "The old hands always are down on a newcomer."

"I wonder why——"

"Well?"

"I was going to say—I wonder why you are so different?" The hat-brim had lifted by three inches, and he caught a dazzling smile. In parenthesis it may be stated that her eyes were as deeply blue and unfathomable as the sea itself! Allan Steyning drew in his breath somewhat sharply. "Don't be a fool, now, *don't* be a fool!" was his mental ejaculation. Aloud he remarked lightly: "Oh, I had a pretty rough time of it, too, when I started, and I suppose I haven't had enough success to make me forget it."

"They behave as though I had injured them in some way," she went on. "Why should they?"

"Well, don't you see, it's like this. You're younger and prettier than the other women, which is a crime to start off with. That's the reason Hilda L'Estrange was so beastly to you just now, and the boys follow suit because it's to their advantage to keep in with her. Then Murdoch picked you out

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of the chorus when Minnie Rivers cracked up, and they think it's rank favouritism, as you've had no experience. They're jealous of you—there you have it in a nut-shell!"

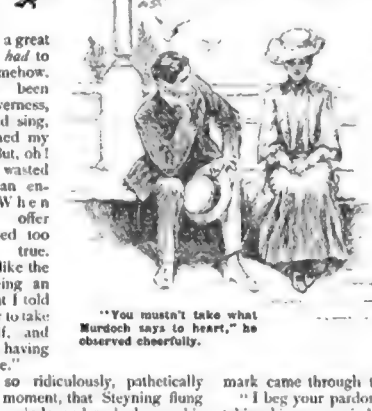
"Jealous of *me?* But how utterly ridiculous! As if I could possibly interfere with *them!*"

"Never mind, it'll be all right in the end," he said encouragingly. "Buck up, and never lose your temper, those are the best tips I can give you."

"I have tried to buck up," she said wistfully; "I suppose there's nothing for it but to go on trying."

"It's too rough a life for you," he said with sudden gruffness. "What, in Heaven's name, made you go in for it?"

"Necessity," she replied with a gleam of humour. "My mother is a great invalid, and I *had* to earn money somehow. I had never been trained for a governess, and, as I could sing, the stage seemed my best chance. But, oh! the money I wasted trying to get an engagement! When Mr. Halkett's offer came it seemed too good to be true. Mother didn't like the idea of my being an actress at all, but I told her I knew how to take care of myself, and she thinks I'm having a delightful time."



"You mustn't take what Murdoch says to heart," he observed cheerfully.

She looked so ridiculously, pathetically young at that moment, that Steyning flung discretion to the winds, and rushed upon his fate.

"I wish you'd give me the right to look after you," he said desperately, "just as a form, you know, till the right fellow comes along. If they thought we were engaged I could save you a lot."

Silence! And that confounded brim had fallen again, leaving him in complete ignorance as to how his daring proposition had been received. Incidentally he endeavoured to take an intelligent interest in the operations of the fishing-fleet, but it seemed like an hour before a smothered voice said: "It's *very* kind of you, but——"

"Oh, hang the 'but,'" he interrupted eagerly, while his heart gave a sudden and joyful bound. "There really isn't a 'but.' I know they'll behave a jolly sight better if they think you've got someone to look after you, and when you leave the company there's an end of the 'engagement.' How's that?"

"It's awfully good of you!" reiterated the muffled voice.

"Rot! And—er—by the way, I shall have to give you a ring, of course."

"Oh, must you?"

"Well, it's the usual thing, you know, and we must study appearances a little."

"Yes, of course; but——"

"Another 'but'?"

"I was thinking of the money."

"Oh, I'm not so 'stony' as all that, only don't set your heart on diamonds or anything of that kind."

"How ridiculous you are! Of course, you will have it back again, but I should be happier if you got a very cheap one. Wouldn't a sham one do?"

"Certainly not. Horrible idea! And, I say, just one more thing—I can't go on saying 'Miss Hamilton' all the time. You won't mind my calling you Marcia when there are people about?"

Some unintelligible remark came through the straw.

"I beg your pardon?" Steyning said, and, taking his courage in both hands, deliberately leant forward and looked under the brim, to find Miss Hamilton—blushing!

"I said that I supposed it could not be avoided," she murmured.

"I am afraid not," he replied gravely. "Of course, we know it is only a farce, but we must play our parts properly all the same."

"I quite see that, and I suppose I must call you—Allan?"

"Unless my other name would be less distasteful—James?"

"Oh, no, I like Allan. I mean, it's more uncommon, isn't it? Not that it matters in the least."

"Certainly not. Well, that's all satisfactorily settled, then, and now, I suppose, it's time for us to be jogging back."

This was the conclusion of scene number one.

Scene number two took place on a certain morning three months later, when they stood together discussing another and more serious situation. Steyning's first speech had had the effect of causing the light suddenly to die out of Miss Hamilton's eyes.

"The notice up?" she echoed blankly. "Oh, Allan!"

It was the first time the name had passed her lips unconsciously, and, in spite of his depression, he was sensible of a thrill of delight.

"I have been expecting it for ever so long," he said, "I know the signs of the times. I didn't say anything to you, because bad luck comes quite fast enough, Heaven knows. This last piece has been a frost from the beginning. I only wonder Halkett has kept it on so long."

"I knew we were not doing well, but I never thought it would come to this," she faltered. "And, oh, dear, I've saved so little, so *dreadfully* little!"

On the extended fingers of her other hand was a small, shining object.

The delicate colour had deserted her face, and the note of tragedy in her voice made him wince. He tried to encourage her by speaking hopefully, but was painfully aware that his remarks lacked conviction. The actor who, with the notice newly up, can be convincingly optimistic, has yet to be found.

When she had passed on with a pucker in her pretty forehead, and a downward droop of the mouth, Steyning racked his brains to think of some way in which he might benefit her. He knew that in the dark days ahead he would need every penny of his slender savings for advertising purposes, not to mention such prosaic details as board and lodging. Yet Marcia *must* be helped somehow, and he wandered about aimlessly for more than an hour pondering ways and means. Finally he arrived at the conclusion that for a man to sport a gold watch-chain was merely a piece of vulgar ostentation, a downright error of taste in fact. Fortunately the remedy was obvious. He sought an accommodating jeweller, and after a brief conference, left the shop with the munificent sum of five pounds in his pocket.

"I want you to promise me something," he said to Marcia, when the time had come for them to wish each other good-bye.

"Yes, what is it?"

"I want your promise before I tell you. You can trust me, can't you?"

But instead of meeting his eyes she deliberately turned her head aside.

"Very well, I promise," she said faintly.

He took her hand and closed the fingers upon an envelope. "I want you to keep it until—that is, in case things should get steep—one never knows—then you may open it," he said incoherently.

"Allan! It's not *money?*"

"You promised," he urged.

"I *can't* take it; I don't know when I should ever be able to repay you."

"Never mind about that; I shan't dun you," he said gaily.

"I know you're awfully hard up yourself," she protested.

"Nothing of the sort; I've got plenty to rub along with until another shop turns up. What—what on earth is that?" For on the extended fingers of her other hand was a small, shining object, and at the sight of it his laborious gaiety died a swift death. But she was too much agitated herself to notice how white he had grown.

"The ring," she faltered—"your ring."

"You won't keep it, then?" he said quietly.

"How could I? It was only a farce, as you said yourself, and—it's over!"

"Yes, it's over," he agreed dully, looking down at the trivial little circle in his palm.

"But I shall never forget how good you have been to me, Mr. Steyning, never."

"Don't," he said hoarsely, "don't!"

"Why, one would think you were really sorry!" she said, with a praiseworthy attempt at flippancy.

"Sorry? Oh, dear, no!" he said sarcastically. "It's rather pleasing than otherwise to turn your back on everything that makes life worth living."

"I don't — understand," she whispered with dry lips.

"It's very simple. When I suggested we should make a pretence of being engaged, I honestly thought it would make the life easier for you, but I also thought it would give me the shadow of the happiness which was out of my reach." He was staring straight in front of him with unseeing, tortured eyes, and so was unaware of the radiance which had suddenly transformed her face, even as the sunrise lightens the face of the waiting earth. "I said you could trust me not to worry you in any way, and I've kept my word, I think," he went on. "You never guessed?"

"No."

"And it did smooth things a bit for you?"

"You know it did; it just made all the difference."

"Thank you. That will be something to remember, at least." He looked down at the ring again, and then faced her with a smile.

"Good-bye," he said cheerfully, "and good-luck, the best—the best of all good-luck!"

But she ignored the proffered hand.

"May I have my ring back again, if you please?" she said, and her blue eyes were dancing and sparkling like a summer sea. "Oh, to think that you might have gone away and I should never have known!"

He stared at her in a ridiculous, bewildered way. "Have known what?" he stammered.

"That you—cared! How I longed to tell you that day on the pier that I didn't want it to be pretence, and you never saw, you never understood!"

"No," he said slowly, "I never understood." Some of the light in her face seemed to have found a reflection in his, but he shook his head when she held out her left hand. "Don't tempt me," he said huskily. "I can't bind you down to years of waiting—it wouldn't be the square thing. I've no prospects, nor ever likely to have any, as far as I can see. But you are different. With your face and voice you're bound to get on, and then, some day, you would wish you had not been so foolishly generous."

"Generous?" she cried scornfully, "generous? Is it generous of *you* to steal my heart and then throw it away? As though I would not wait for you gladly all my life sooner than marry anyone else! If you had not told me the truth, I could have said good-bye without betraying myself—without your dreaming that I loved you—but now it's impossible. Why do you look so strange—so white?"

"It's knocked me rather, that's all," he said, with an attempt at a laugh. "Oh, child, if you knew what it means to me!"

She came closer to him and put her hand on his arm. "I'm *so* tired of the farce, Allan," she said softly; "suppose we turn it into a comedy? There's another part I'm just dying to take."

"What is it?"

"Your leading lady!" she cried audaciously, and put out her left hand again in shameless fashion. This time he uttered no protest, but held it fast, and the little ring was returned to its rightful place.

"It's a life-long contract," he observed warningly, but she appeared in no wise dismayed.

"Perhaps, then, it would be more business-like to sign it," was her demure reply.

Which he did—upon her lips.

CAP AND BELLS

PRESENCE OF MIND.

"No, Mr. Homewood," said Miss Beachwood, firmly but kindly, "I cannot be your wife, but I will be a sister to you."

"Very well," said the young man resignedly, "will you assume my name, or shall I take yours?"

* * * * *

BALLADE OF SPRING FASHIONS.

The West-end shops are all a-blow,
Their nets are spread, and not in vain;
A pilgrimage we now must go
To rig my lady out again.
We join the giddy Bond-street train,
And Juliet's nerves begin to thrill;
Mine also is this "window-pain" –
My part is just to pay the bill!

Frail woman worships hats, we know,
And here in royal state they reign;
They mesmerise her, row on row,
They draw her through the doors amain.
No woman born could stand the strain,
Resistance must be passive still;
And so 'tis useless to complain–
My part is just to pay the bill!

Anon we face a dearer foe,
By dress-material Juliet's slain;
Her "good mind" wavers to and fro,
She'll get bolero-on-the-brain!
A speechless wonderment I feign
While she discusses eau de nil,
Torn between cashmere and delaine–
My part is just to pay the bill!

ENVOY.

Oh, Fashion, monster, thrice insane,
You bind your victims at your will,
But what mere man can break your chain?–
My part is just to pay the bill!

J. G. NICHOLSON.

WHAT OUGHT TO HAPPEN.

HE: "Do you think a fellow ought to be locked up for stealing kisses?"

SHE: "N—no, hardly. But I think he ought to be tied up."

So now they're engaged.

* * * * *

ANY EXCUSE.

ANGELINA: "That was a lovely engagement ring you gave me last night, dear; but what do those initials, 'E.C.,' mean on the inside?"

EDWIN (who has bestowed the ring before and had it back): "Why—er—that is—don't you know that is the new way of stamping eighteen carats?"

* * * * *

LOVE'S YOUNG DREAM.

FATHER: "Now, see here! If you marry that young pauper, how on earth are you going to live?"

SWEET GIRL: "I have been reading a poultry circular, and I find that a good hen will hatch twenty chickens in a season. Well, the next season that will be twenty-one hens; and as each will hatch twenty more chicks, that will be 420. The next year the number will be 8400, the following year 168,000, and the next 3,360,000! Just think! At only one shilling apiece, we should have £168,000. Then, you dear old papa, we'll lend you some money so that you will be able to pay off the mortgage on this house."

"It was a lover and his lass."

A RISKY BUSINESS.

MRS. SHARPTONGUE: "Do you mean to say you've been married ten years, and never had a quarrel with your husband?"

FAIR STRANGER: "That is true, madam."

MRS. SHARPTONGUE: "And you always let him have the last word?"

FAIR STRANGER: "Yes, madam; I wouldn't for the world do anything to lessen my husband's love for me. He might get careless."

MRS. SHARPTONGUE: "Careless?"

FAIR STRANGER: "Yes; we are jugglers by profession, and at two performances a day I stand against a board while he throws the knives."

* * *

WHEN EXTREMES MEET.

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF: "I understand that young Bluegore, the millionaire's son, has gone in for journalism."

CITY EDITOR: "Yes. He's on my staff."

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF: "And what do you think of him?"

CITY EDITOR: "Well, he's a unique figure in journalism."

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF: "You don't say so?"

CITY EDITOR: "Yes. He's at once the richest and the poorest reporter in the city."

TRADE UNIONISM UP-TO-DATE.

"If you'll always give me full swing," observed the Pendulum, "you'll never have any trouble with your hands."

"I don't know," replied the Clock. "If it wasn't for your going to and fro in my works, I shouldn't have any strikes."

SCOTCH MEDICINE.

A stranger came to a Scotch provincial town one day. He looked somewhat of an invalid, and he asked one of the inhabitants to direct him to the chemist's shop.

"The what, sir?"

"The chemist's shop."

"Ay, an' what kin' o' shop is that, na?"

"Why, the place where you can buy medicine."

"Eh, sir, we've nae sic shop as that here."

"No? What do you do, then, when anyone falls ill? Do you take no medicine?"

"'Deed, no; not a drap. We're just whiskey for the folk and tar for the sheep, an' that's a' the feesick we deal in."

* * * *

HIS FATE.

SMYTHE: "Remember when Jones was married last year, how he kicked about the duplicate wedding presents?"

BROWNE: "Yes."

SMYTHE: "Well, that sort of luck seems to follow him. He had a somewhat similar complaint yesterday."

BROWNE: "What was it?"

SMYTHE: "Duplicate birthday presents. That is to say—twins."

Father Time (a trifle out of his reckoning): "Ahoy, there! Am I heading right for Earth?"

Man in the Moon: "Ay, ay, straight on down; it's about two hundred and fifty thousand knots as the comet flies, so you'd better look sharp if you want to get that youngster there in time."

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HIS DEAREST POSSESSION.

"You say you love me; how are you going to prove it?"

"I swear to you by——"

"Swear by something of supreme importance—something dear to you as life itself."

"Adela, I swear to you by my salary!"

* * * * *

AN EYE-DYLL.

There's but one thing in all the world
That equals quite
Thy lovely eye, so wondrous blue,
So limpid bright:
Just one in all this wide, wide world
That e'er could vie
With it for charm, and that thing is—
Thine other eye.

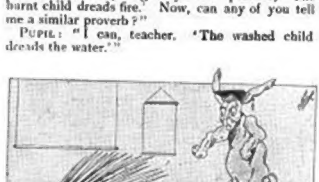
L. N.

* * * * *

KNEW FROM EXPERIENCE.

TEACHER: "I just gave you the proverb, 'The burnt child dreads fire.' Now, can any of you tell me a similar proverb?"

PUPIL: "I can, teacher. 'The washed child dreads the water.'"



The Scholar the Master never Spanked!

THE WAY OUT.

SWEET GIRL: "Oh, papa! I have found a way for you to escape the death duties."

FATHER: "I fancy not."

SWEET GIRL: "Yes, I have. You give half your stocks to Mr. Slimpurse, and then I'll marry Mr. Slimpurse, and so all the money will be kept in the family and the Government won't get a penny."

* * * * *

UNJUST SUSPICION.

POLICE CONSTABLE: "Look here, young man, you've been hanging about here for an hour. It's very suspicious. What are you up to?"

YOUNG MR. DAPPER (who has been a father just eleven days): "Oh, nothing. You see, I am waiting until there is no one in the chemist's shop, so that I can go in and buy a feeding bottle."

* * * * *

KNOCK FOR KNOCK.

SHE: "A mathematician has calculated that a man sixty years old has spent three years of his life buttoning his coat."

HE: "Is that so? I wonder how many years of her life a woman of forty-five has wasted in putting her hat on straight?"

XMAS AT THE ZOO.

The Pelican (rather indistinctly): "Yes, I've just been doing a little seasonable shopping with Mrs. P. I"

UNDONE.

MOTHER: "So you enjoyed your walk, Kate. Did you go all that distance alone?"

DAUGHTER: "Oh, yes, mamma, quite alone."

YOUNG BROTHER: "Then, how is it you took an umbrella out and brought back a walking-stick?"

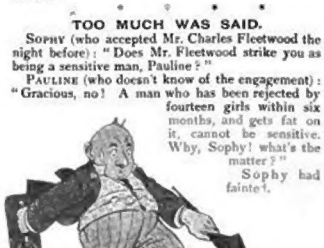
* * * * *

TOO MUCH WAS SAID.

SOPHY (who accepted Mr. Charles Fleetwood the night before): "Does Mr. Fleetwood strike you as being a sensitive man, Pauline?"

PAULINE (who doesn't know of the engagement): "Gracious, no! A man who has been rejected by fourteen girls within six months, and gets fat on it, cannot be sensitive. Why, Sophy! what's the matter?"

Sophy had fainted.



A man never seems to value his hat so highly as he does when a frisky wind keeps it rolling along the pavement just three feet in front of him.

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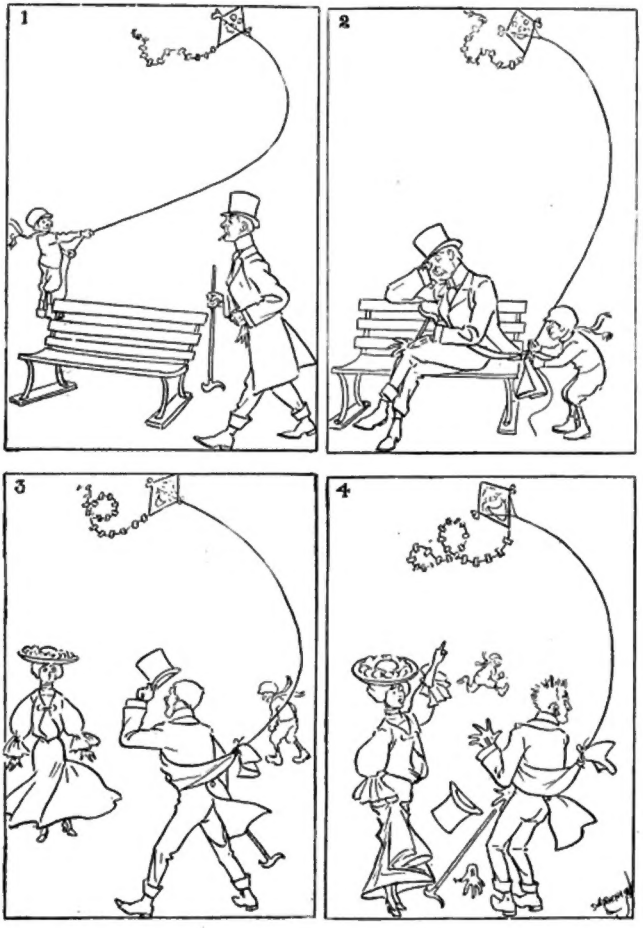
THE DOWNFALL OF ALGERNON.
(A Story which needs no words.)



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MR. EDITOR —HIS PAGE

I Want you Particularly to Read this Page.

"THE STANDARD" READING CLUB.

When some people find a treasure they like to keep it to themselves. I'm not one of these selfish folk. I've just hit on something very precious, and the first thing I do is to give my friends an opportunity of sharing it. I have, in short, become a member of "The Standard" Reading Club, and I want you, for your own good, to follow my example.

There was never such a quixotically convenient circulating library invented before. For a subscription of £2 5*s.* 0*d.* a year, or 11*s.* 6*d.* a quarter, or 4*s.* a month, you receive "The Standard" daily and *two books* which can be changed as often as you like—ten times a day if the fancy takes you. Moreover, additional books may be obtained for 10*s.* a year, 2*s.* 6*d.* a quarter, or 1*od.* a month each.

Nor is this all. Subscribers in and about London are enabled to send and receive books *free* as often as they please. The agents of "The Standard" Reading Club will call at any address within an area with Ashford to the West, Selsdon to the South, Winchmore Hill to the North, and Woolwich to the East, whenever a subscriber desires new books. Furthermore, arrangements have been made with the railways which reduce the cost of carriage on "The Standard" Reading Club's parcels very considerably.

Have you ever heard of generosity to equal this scheme? I became a subscriber the moment I heard of the Club. And I thoroughly advise you to follow my example.

If you want further particulars, all you have to do is to write to the Manager, "The Standard" Reading Club, Shoe Lane, London, E.C.

A CAT STORY.

I am telling you this true cat story with a purpose, as you will discover when you come to the end of it.

The cat in question belonged to a farmer. In order to allow it to come in and out of the house at its own sweet will, a hole was cut into the door of a shed which opened on to the kitchen. The objection to this plan very soon became apparent. The cat, not content with using the hole for herself, brought home sundry boon companions, who made no bones about abusing the hospitality of their host by helping themselves liberally to whatever they could find in the kitchen.

So the owner of the cat fixed a piece of wood with leather hinges on the outside of the cat's hole. She was, therefore, able to push her way out, but not in. When she wanted to return home she had to wait "mewing" outside until someone let her in. This lasted for a short while, when one day, to the astonishment of her owner, the cat made her appearance in the kitchen as though her hole had never been tampered with. This she did on several occasions, and finally her owner watched to see how she managed the job.

He saw an extraordinary sight. The cat lay on her back, and with her fore-paws lifted the flap of wood, then with a sudden twist of her body drew herself through the aperture.

Now this is a perfectly true story, and I am particularly anxious for more of a similar nature—not merely about cats, but about any animals under the sun. For true stories—and they must be true—which I consider worthy of publication, I will, of course, pay.

"SCRAPS."

I receive many funny letters which are not always meant to be funny. For instance, this morning a lady writes to me:

Dear Sir,—I have taken the liberty of sending you these few scraps, which I trust you will accept.

It was, for all the world, as though she were forwarding me the remains of her dinner instead of a few jokes, especially as the first "scrap" was headed:

"Caution to Greedy People!"

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